

Love and Photography: See the Story Complete in this No.

# THE LONDON READER

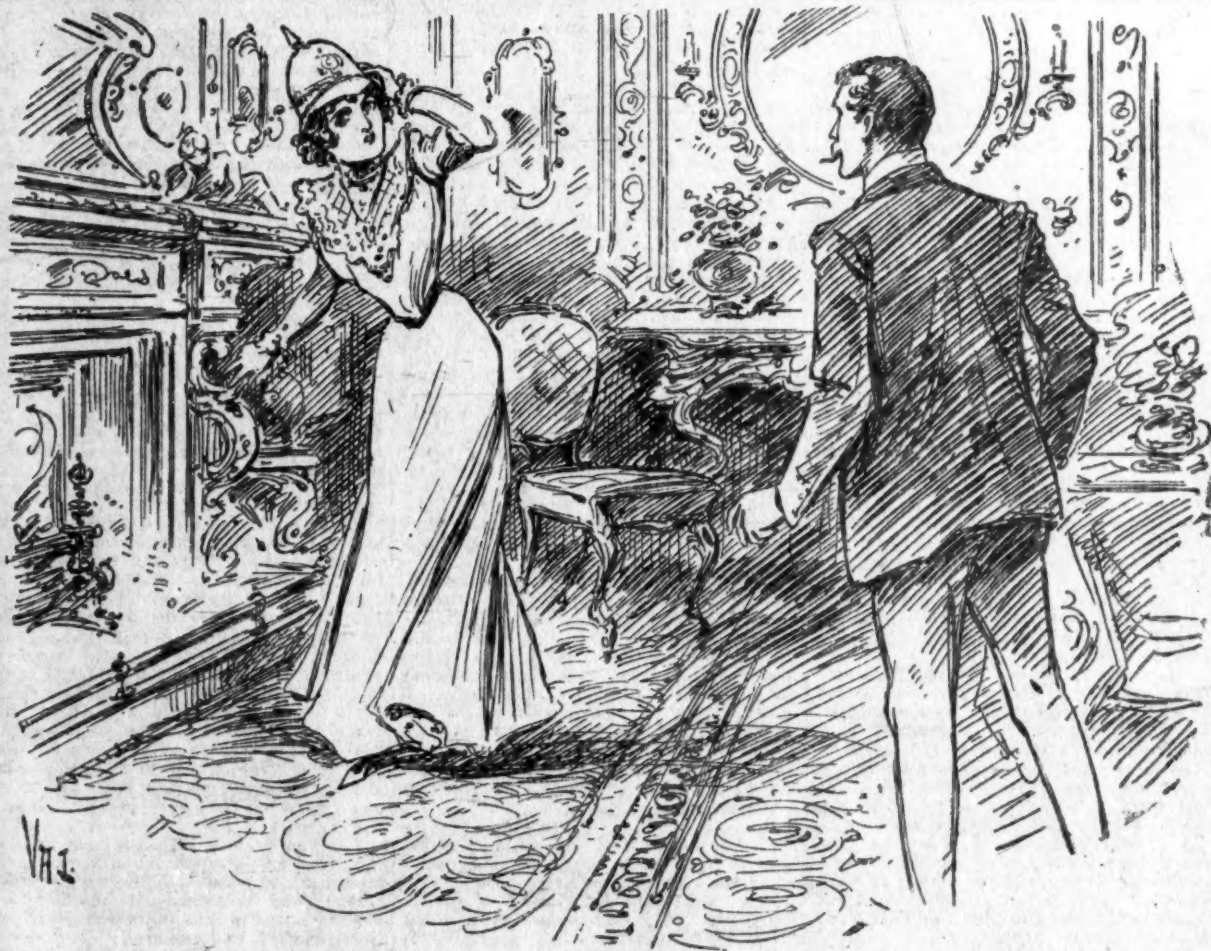
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[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



"OH! HOW ABSURD AND INCONGRUOUS IT LOOKS! I'D DO FOR JOAN OF ARC CAPITALLY. OH, DALLAS!"

WAS FRANCES TREMEYER'S CONFUSED EJACULATION.

## HER PHOTOGRAPHER.

[A NOVELETTE.]

COMPLETE IN THIS NUMBER.

### CHAPTER I.

**S**O this is how you have been amusing yourself, is it? What-ever made you take up photography, Frances?"

The speaker, a pretty stylishly dressed young woman, turned slightly on her seat to glance curiously at her companion.

"I don't know. Read an article on it, and thought it would be something to do.

So I went to the Kodak Company, bought a camera, took some lessons; and it seemed then quite easy, so I began. But it is not easy—far from it."

"Well, my dear, it may be very interesting, but it certainly cannot be recommended as a complexion improver. You look positively washed out—as white as a—

as a—"

"Say lily," added the girl spoken to, lightly, and with a mirthless laugh. "It sounds more poetical. And, after all, who cares how I look? I am sure I don't for one. I have been in the dark room a good deal lately, working at some views I took."

"In the dark room!" echoed Mrs. Searight. "We shall have you in a padded room soon if you carry on like this."

Frances Tremeyer turned her great sombre dark eyes upon her. The face, pretty as it was, lacked colour,—nay, life. The eyes were gloomy and sad, the mouth proud, cold, almost bitter—an expression that did not suit the young rounded cheeks and smooth outlines of youth.

"Oh, Kitty, it is not photography that will drive me there. I feel much happier since I discovered this new occupation. It gives me something to think about. And when I am shut up in my little room I don't think about—about other things," she said, desperately. "I am not very successful so far; and Bertha, my maid, you know, cannot help but laugh at my attempts. I take her with me when I make an expedition."

Next Week's Novelette is a Stirring and Romantic Story.

"Where do you go for these expeditions?"

"Oh, anywhere into the country, 'far from the madding crowd.'"

"Yourself being one of the maddest!" added Mrs. Searight.

"No, it is rather fun. Father promised to come, but he never does. I suppose Mrs. Tremeyer won't let him! We roam about, and get some lunch at any cottage we can. I take a good many views each time, and then have plenty to do between whiles developing them."

"Well, my dear, if I were you I'd give up 'developing' in that line and take to something more lively. The few specimens you showed me were not, well, let me say, exactly lovely."

They drove on for some little time in silence. Mrs. Searight gazing about, with her bright, animated face all aglow with life and happiness, affording a marked contrast to the gloomy still one beside her, which ought to have been so much the lovelier of the two.

"I have an idea!" suddenly announced Mrs. Searight, leaning forward in the victoria to touch the footman's back with her parasol. "John," as the man turned round, "tell Harris to drive to Pall-mall. There is a Photographic Exhibition there, Frisca, so we'll go there, and see how other amateurs succeed."

"Oh, Kate, how jolly of you to think of it!" said the girl, looking quite animated for once. "I am sure it will help me. I shall be able to pick up some hints."

"Get disgusted with it, I hope," muttered Mrs. Searight to herself. "As if she were not left a great deal too much to herself as it is, without being half-poisoned in a dark, stuffy little cupboard, breathing nothing but villainous odours from blue bottles! No wonder she is pale and lifeless!" as she glanced at the girl on entering the gallery.

"Oh, how lovely!" Frances exclaimed, as they wandered round the pictures. "They make me despair, though!" with a huge sigh.

"I am glad to hear it!" said Mrs. Searight, unsympathetically. "Now, you go on! I've had enough, so shall avail myself of this lounge. Do not hurry, Frances, dear. Enjoy yourself, and I shall do the same."

As she sat there dreamily comfortable, a man crossed her line of vision; and something in the firm, slow step, and in the carriage of the small head attracted her.

She looked up to see what kind of face went with such a figure; but the back of the head only was visible, displaying some smooth, brown hair, cut so short that it was hardly distinguishable from the glimpse of the much-bronzed neck.

However, the figure was worthy of scrutiny, so splendidly formed was it, so erect and tall, with grand, broad shoulders and straight outlines—a typical Englishman.

"He might be a king, he looks so masterful!" mused Mrs. Searight.

And yet his clothes were nondescript, and even shabby, the brown, strong-looking hands guiltless of covering, and the walking-stick tucked under one arm was meant for use, not ornament.

Clearly this young man was not blessed with an overflowing supply of this world's goods.

Yes. Surely she could see something yellow gleaming out from one of those much-used coat pockets. He smoked a pipe! for that was undoubtedly an amber mouth-piece.

"I wish he would turn his head," she said, as he stood there, so close she could have touched him. She was about to drop her parasol and make him look, when he

turned suddenly, and her first feeling was one of disappointment.

No Adonis this if she had expected such. And yet it was a face superior to mere beauty—a face that grew upon one, and won its way by merit of its clear honest, masterful eyes, that looked one through and through; a firm determined-looking chin and square jaw, that bespoke great strength of will and intensity of purpose, but which would have been strangely softened by the mouth had the drooping yellow moustache not completely hidden it.

As Mrs. Searight watched the quiet observant countenance she saw a sudden awakening flash come into his eyes, and a look of eager interest across the face, as if his sight were attracted by some entrancing picture.

But it was no photograph at which he gazed, but a living, moving, picture that was coming slowly and absorbedly towards him; and with a start of surprise she saw it was Frances Tremeyer who had caused this sudden interest.

And no wonder! For she was looking really beautiful as she passed down the gallery. The afternoon sunlight was streaming in through the skylight windows on to the small slightly upturned face with its fathomless gloomy eyes, and faintly flushed cheeks, while the curly locks of dusky hair, straying from under her hat's brim, were tinged to ruddy gold, and fell with soft shadows on the pure rounded temples.

Mrs. Searight hesitated for one moment only; but seeing the stranger's gaze never swerved from the girl, watching every movement of the dainty lisom figure, every inflection of the sweet face, with a wrapt look of boundless admiration, she crossed promptly over, and laying her hand on Frances's arm, brought her back from dreamland.

Of course, a pretty girl must be noticed, and any man had a perfect right to admire her to his full bent; but—oh! powerful distraction!—this one's coat was shabby, and poor admiration was not to be countenanced. Frances must be manoeuvred away before the interest became mutual.

There was no telling what fancies she might not indulge in; she was such an eccentric being, and those blue eyes were the most dangerously attractive ones that even this anxious worldly experienced little chaperone had ever seen.

She even took another peep at them herself as she drew her companion's attention to something near the door, out of which she took good care they soon went.

Then Mrs. Searight breathed freely. Frances had not seen him, had not noticed the powerful interest she had clearly awakened, and now they stood at the entrance waiting for the carriage to drive up. Down the stone steps behind them came a firm, sharp ringing tread, and a voice said,—

"Ah, thank you!"

Both the ladies turned at the words, and saw the tall young fellow take a dog-chain from the commissionaire, who was standing in the hall holding a huge brindled bulldog in leash.

He stooped, undid the chain from the collar, slipped it into one of those unshapely coat-pockets, and passed out, call-out in a voice of wonderful depth and charm,—

"Come on, Tatters! To heel, sir!"

He raised his hat slightly as he crossed before them, and the brave blue eyes flashed full and direct for one brief second over the quiet unconscious face; and then he was gone, striding away down the street, with the dog trotting along close beside him.

Mr. Searight, on Frances going

back with her, and soon they were seated in her snug drawing-room, sipping tea and chatting confidentially.

But a few minutes ago a silence had fallen upon them, to be broken at last by the girl asking,—

"Katie, you ought to know. Do you believe in love?"

"Believe in love!" laughed Mrs. Searight. "What are you dreaming about now? Take my advice and leave love alone yet awhile."

Frances did not answer at once. The dark, sad eyes were staring into the bright flames, and the restless fingers wove themselves in and out of each other.

"I must tell you something, Kitty. It has been frightening me, and I have no one to help me. You know that old St. Bernard Hawtrey, who is always coming to our house to see Maude Stanhope, so Mrs. Tremeyer told me?"

"Yes, Frisca, and what of him? I know him, and have heard of the way she is trying to—"

Mrs. Searight broke off. Perhaps it would not do to tell this girl, who knew so little of the world and its ways, and thought of everything with highflown ideas, what young ladies of Miss Stanhope's type try to do. "Doesn't he come to see her?"

A sudden scorching flush flooded the pale cheeks, and the lips curled scornfully, as she passionately answered,—

"No! He is deceiving her! He dared to tell me last night that he came to see me. Me, Katie! As if I had not enough to bear but he should add to my misery! I loathe him! To touch his hand again would sting me!"

"And do you not like Miss Stanhope any better?"

"Like her!" burst from the girl. "Could anyone? She makes me feel ashamed of my sex when she flatters and fools that old man, and then makes fun of him behind his back. But she means to be Lady Hawtrey, and I think she hates me, for she is always watching me with those glittering eyes of hers. I know she is turning Mrs. Tremeyer against me. Oh!" with a sudden impulse of utter misery, "why did father marry again? It is no longer 'home' to me. He is no longer anything to me. And I would have tried so hard to make him comfortable and happy! How I used to count the weeks till my schooldays should be over, and he and I would be together again. And this is the end of it all!"

The great eyes looked woeful and despairing as the firelight flashed on them, but no tears came to relieve their aching wretchedness; and Mrs. Searight, knowing how the girl's sorrow was beyond the reach of word comfort, only tenderly stroked the little hand as she thought of the cloud that had blighted this fair young life.

Her father, General Tremeyer, after remaining a widower all these years, and pouring out the love that his lost wife would have had upon her motherless child, had quite recently been caught in the toils of an enormously rich young widow while with his regiment in Calcutta, and had married her.

The news had burst like a bombshell upon his daughter, who was about to be emancipated from the schoolroom to join her father, and whose hours, waking and sleeping, had been filled with dreams of a future, to be spent alone with him. Now her place was usurped, and the lovesick General was so devoted to his idol that he had no time even to notice how terribly his child suffered from the blow.

She went home, only to find that she and her stepmother were not likely to "hit it off."

"She is much too solemn and conscien-





tions for me," wrote the new *châtelaine* to her sister, Maude Stanhope. "Always wanting to know why such and such things are said, and so on. And I fancy she is jealous. You see, she adores Ralph, and he, dear fellow, adores me, naturally."

Very soon Miss Stanhope came to stay with them, and then the girl's life grew lonelier than ever; for the visitor proved insatiable in her love of amusement, and the poor General, longing sorely for rest, was dragged about day and night in attendance upon his bride and her sister-in-law.

But the season passed, and the outcome of all the admiration the handsome Miss Stanhope had gloried in was—not one proposal of marriage!

Her object was unattained; till that was accomplished there would be little peace for anyone else.

Frances must still be kept in the background, for her rapidly-developing beauty might prove a hindrance. And, besides, Maude had taken a dislike to the girl. She hated those clear, deep eyes, that she knew read her through and through, sometimes hardly understanding the meaner character.

But lately the dislike to her had grown stronger, for Miss Stanhope discovered that the man she meant to captivate, was not blind to the fact that Frances was showing promise of a beauty that would soon eclipse her own doll-like, but slightly faded perfections.

The poor girl's character was dwarfing under this isolation, and the deep, strong well of love was crushed back into the lonely heart, but only to go stronger through this treatment, and more ready to spring forth at the slightest touch from Cupid's hand.

The entrance of a servant with the rosily gleaming lamps broke the silence, and with a sigh Francis Tremeyer rose from her seat, saying,—

"I must go, Katie. Heaven is over, and now for purgatory."

"Don't talk like that, dear," said Mrs. Scarrington, kissing her, and then putting her hand's on the girl's shoulder, added, "and don't think about love yet awhile. It is very rapturous to 'be in love' and all that, but there are many attendant drawbacks, and till the 'wild, mad bliss' is over, the thorns often prick as sharply as the roses smell. The 'fancy free' period is, after all, the happiest of a girl's life. Cheer up, and look forward to the grand 'coming out' day when this loneliness will be for ever at an end, and you will be the belle of the season!"

"They had better take care of the girl," said the little woman to herself, as she re-entered the room, after seeing Frances off. "She is just the sort to go in for *une grande passion*. Those eyes of her's weren't given her for nothing. She will fall madly in love one of these days, and ten to one with some worthless fellow, not fit to tie her shoe-strings, or else as poor as a church mouse!" A vision of a tall figure, in a shabby coat, and a pair of wondrous blue eyes rose before her, and she frowned viciously, then laughed. "I hope she will never see him again. He would make the most sceptical believe in 'love at first sight'!"

### CHAPTER III.

"GRACE, I want to tell you something." Mrs. Tremeyer looked up a little impatiently to say,—

"Well, what is it now?"

It was some few days later. Mrs. Tremeyer had been confined to her room with a cold, so her sister had had to go about without her.

"You must send Frances away."

"Send her away! Where to? Why?" Mrs. Tremeyer had been dozing, and her sister's entrance bewildered her.

"Anywhere. The farther the better will please me!" with a nasty little laugh. "But she is likely to spoil my little game, and I won't stand that."

The expression on Miss Stanhope's face might have frightened Sir Bernard Hawtrey from trying to share that "little game" had he seen it then.

"Did you know Frances was out all yesterday?"

"Was she?" asked Mrs. Tremeyer indolently. "Oh, yes; Ralph did say something about Frances and photographs."

"That is her latest blind. Very amusing, doubtless, when there is someone to help."

"Oh, my dear Maude, she only takes Bertha and occasionally one of the footmen to carry the things."

"So you think. I happen to know differently. I saw Sir Bernard helping her out of a station at the Great Western yesterday. Now do you understand why we must go at once."

"I daresay he happened only just to have met her. But I suppose you have thought of a plan! You generally have one ready."

"Of course I have," said her sister, in a hard tone, and with a cruel gleam in her china-blue eyes. "Pretend you think she looks 'seedy' and wants change of air, which will be true enough, for she looked a washed-out object at breakfast."

"Oh, come, Maude, don't let your jealousy go so far. Frances may be pale; she generally is, very, but she could never look an object. I wish you would bring Hawtrey to the point if you mean to have him, for I don't like to treat Frances so. Ralph has spoken to me about it. And you must allow she does not encourage Sir Bernard. It is not likely so pretty a girl as she is would give a second thought to such an old man."

"Grace, don't be so plain-spoken. You want me to settle, so you must do as I tell you. Now, finish your snooze, you lazy creature, but arrange it soon. I am off with the old horror for a drive. I wish we were married, and then I should not have to take any notice of him!"

With which highly-promising speech for "the old horror's" future happiness Miss Stanhope departed.

Mrs. Tremeyer watched Frances that evening, and was a trifle startled to observe how pale and sad the bright, glowing face had become, and how dark and dreary were the great luminous eyes. Perhaps a change would do her good; anyway she would propose it.

Needless to say the girl jumped at the suggestion. Mrs. Tremeyer was relieved to find how easily all her worry was settled; and the end of the week found Frances and her maid on the way to Breitreppé, a small seaside place on the east coast, renowned for its bracing air and quietness.

General Tremeyer saw them off, promising to run down often to see her, as he settled her photographing paraphernalia in the rack over her head.

They had arrived early at the terminus, so, after choosing the carriage, went to the book-stall; and as they dawdled about a young man, with a rather disreputable-looking bull-dog passed by. A rapid glance at the tall, graceful figure and his steps were arrested, while a glad light filled the blue eyes. He hesitated, then drew near just in time to hear the porter saying,—

"The train is about to start, sir, for Breitreppé."

So that was her destination. Whistling to the dog he hurried out of the station and walked quietly away in the direction of St. James's.

"Hallo! By all the powers, Will Wentworth! So here you are, unearthed at last."

"Dallas! you! I didn't know you were in town."

"By Jove, Wentworth, I am glad to have come across you. I thought you must have had a nasty fall of some kind, but you look radiant. Why, man, what's up? Excuse the remark, but your clothes betoken a long-deferred visit to your tailor's, and yet you look as jolly as a sandboy. Where were you going? Come along o' me, and tell me all the news. Let's go to the 'Constitutional' and have a snack," and Dallas Wyndham linked arms to march him off.

"No, thanks. I don't frequent clubs since I've given up visiting my tailor," answered the other bitterly. "Are you sure you don't mind being seen with such an out at elbows chap? I hardly look the style for you."

"Wentworth! This from you!" exclaimed Mr. Wyndham. "Have you known me so long and yet not found out how little I hold by 'leather or prunella'?"

They marched on silently, but presently the tall, blue-eyed young man asked, as he glanced with a fine assumption of carelessness at his dog,—

"So you haven't heard of the fatal fall of Humpty-Dumpty, alias, W. W., alias Willis Wentworth? Only another young man gone wrong, nothing unusual now-a-days."

"Will, old fellow, I know nothing, and this suspense is painful. Sit down here, and tell me what is up."

Wentworth threw himself down on the iron seat beside his friend.

"It doesn't need much telling," he said, with a gloomy look that sat strangely on the bright, open countenance. "I brought it on myself; still you, who have seen my grandfather in his rages, can make some allowance for me. He had made up his mind I was to marry Lady Julia Talbot. Now, Lady Julia may be everything that a man can desire, and she is the daughter of an earl, and her estates, unluckily for me, do border on Cheshamshire; but if a man can't choose his wife, what can he choose? All other relations are forced upon him, or else for sure I shouldn't have selected such an old fiery pepper pot for a grandfather."

"Well, I held out. He fumed, stormed, raved, and I, finding these thunderstorms only thickened the air, took myself off with Brander, Temple, and Forwood to Norway. Jolly time there, no end of piscatorial luck. If I'd only had an inkling of what was pending I might have started a fish-stall at Billingsgate. Would you have patronised me, old man?"

"Go on, Will," said his listener, shortly. He knew this was mere bravado to hide the smarting pain his friend was enduring.

"One fine morning—by Jove, such a morning for the fish, how they would have bitten! well, all right, I'll drive ahead—came a letter from my solicitor, summoning me. As luck would have it, I had, before leaving England, backed a bill for Brander for a thousand. He was always up a spout, and now he has gone to Madras, and I've had to meet it for him. When I got to London I had a staggerer for a face. The old man had stopped my allowance, every farthing, and I had only a few pounds over beside the thousand, which has gone as you know. Brander had forgotten it, I suppose."

Wyndham looked at his companion as he puffed at his cigar. The boyish trustfulness of the last words made a sudden choking sensation rise in his throat, and for a few minutes he dared not speak. When he did so it was almost sharply, so moved was he.

"Will, I thought you'd more sense than to play ducks and drakes with money like that. And what have you done since? You might have let me know."

Will left off tracing patterns and digging holes in the pathway, and turned to Dallas.

"I couldn't, old fellow," was all he said.

But presently he went on,—

"I found my music very useful. I got quite a lot of engagements to play the organs at churches for fellows who wanted to go away, and sometimes sang solos in the choir. I can sing, you know. I am up to a rum dodge now. You will be horrified, but a fellow must live; and till you try it you've no idea how hard it is to make money, nor how thundering quickly it melts. I suppose I waste a lot. I never was a good hand at saying."

"No, by Jove, you weren't! I'll agree there," broke in his listener, with an uncontrollable smile that ended in a frown. "Well, fire away. What's the latest? Crossing-sweeping or organ-grinding?"

"Oh! that's my Sabbath occupation," Wentworth laughed. "On week days I'm a travelling photographer, at your service."

"A what?"

"I go about taking views for firms. You know I always was a dab at that kind of thing. It's easy work, better than sitting still in an office. You see, I know nothing, and a few days showed me my level. Don't look so glum, old fellow. It isn't so bad. I've funds in hand now, and the days go at double the speed when one has something to do. I must be on the move now."

"Where are you off to? Can't you come and stay with me?"

The gravel seemed suddenly to require attention, and Wentworth bent over his stick as he patted away, and smoothed down the stones, but such a hot flush was burning on his face that his friend detected it instantly.

"Will," said Dallas, solemnly, "you are hiding something from me. You know it's no use trying to do that till you've left off that ridiculous habit of 'smoking.' You are like the young ladies whose cheeks tell tales what time their eyes are mute. Out with it."

"Dallas, I am in love!"

"Oh, ye gods and little fishes!" Wyndham laughed long and heartily, while his companion flicked his boot, and then patted his patient "Tatters."

"Oh, Will, Will, you perverse boy! When you were in possession of a goodly allowance, with the prospect of some day having it increased to an overflowing extent, you would never look at a girl, boited at sight of a petticoat, and turned up your fastidious nose at even the daughter of an earl."

"Pshaw! Leave her alone, man!" broke in Wentworth, bitterly, while an angry look passed across the rather worn face.

"All right, no offence," said Wyndham, lightly touching his shoulder. "Now, you haven't a son to bless yourself with, and have taken up the aristocratic profession of a perambulating nature-shooter, you at once fall in love. My dear fellow, take my advice, and—

"Fall from the top of some high tree,

Fall from the rocks above,

Fall from your horse and break your neck,

But never fall in love."

However, 'tis a sudden fever, soon past."

"Never, Wyndham. I have seen the girl I mean to make my wife!"

"Will, are you mad?"

Something in those brave flashing blue eyes, in that firmly shut mouth and resolute chin, rather startled Dallas Wyndham, as he doubtfully asked,—

"Who is she?"

"Ah, cautious taskmaster, fear not. She is a lady as far above me as yonder crescent moon."

"Do you know her?"

"No, I saw her at the Photographic Exhibition some days back, and to-day I saw her at Victoria. She has gone down to Breitreppé with her maid. This afternoon I go to Breitreppé with my dog as a 'perambulating nature-shooter,'" with a malicious gleam at his astonished friend. "Then nous verrons!"

"But, my dear chap, you can't get to know her if you will sink your identity like this. Better come and stay with me till the old man comes round."

"And perhaps lose sight of her? Not I."

"But young and lovely maidens, and I presume she is both to have awakened this violent passion, don't vanish. She will always be found, and if she is anything out of the common, the shop windows will speedily lead to her detection."

"Confound you, Wyndham, I am in earnest," and Willis Wentworth sprang to his feet.

"I beg your pardon, then, dear old Will," said Wyndham, seriously.

"No, I ought to beg yours," answered Will, with his ready smile. "Of course, it sounds to you like the ravings of a lovesick idiot; but I am desperately in earnest. She is my fate!"

"A case of love at first sight. Well, go in and win, old man; and whoever she may be I care not, but she will never meet a better, truer heart than yours, you dear old W. W.!"

Their hands met in a long, silent grip as two pairs of eyes looked searchingly into each others. That look told Dallas that for weal or woe his friend had met his fate, and the true manly heart had been for ever given to an unknown ideal.

### CHAPTER III.

FRANCES TREMEYER was standing at one of the drawing-room windows of a house on the seafront at Breitreppé, looking as if she had already had enough of it. The cold, listless expression, grown habitual to her face in the loveless, lonely home, was accentuated now to positive crossness, for she guessed the reason of her banishment, and was prepared to hate the unwitting cause of it—Sir Bernard Hawtreys.

"Oh, Bertha, were you ever in such a dead-and-alive place!" she exclaimed, addressing her maid who sat near sewing. "I have been here a quarter of an hour, and not a single solitary soul has gone by. Fancy sending me here for the benefit of my health! Much anyone cares about my health! It's too bad, and I should like to do something dreadful just to shock them!"

"Oh, Miss Frances, I wouldn't be for doing that," remonstrated Bertha, looking at her young mistress; "not that I think there is any chance of such a thing," she muttered under her breath.

The girl played a tune on the window-pane, scribbled hieroglyphics on the dull place her breath had made, flicked the tassel of the blind backwards and forwards, at last exclaiming,—

"Oh, someone at last! Why it is that man we are so often meeting! Then one inhabitant of the place, I do believe. There goes his dog, majestically stalking along beside him. What an awful looking creature, but the man is a gentleman!"

"Much too poor, miss, for that. Why, his coat is as shabby as—well, I shouldn't like to be seen walking out alongside of it, that's all."

Frances laughed.

"Oh, Bertha, clothes don't make a gentleman, and you must own his figure is splendid. Why, it's better than father's."

Bertha's sharp, though sympathetic eyes scanned the girl's face. Perhaps, after all,

the something dreadful was not quite so far out of reach as might be supposed.

"Well, he has gone; blissfully smoking. I wish I could smoke," and she shook herself, impatiently.

"Maybe, you'd like to take some more of them photographs, Miss Frances?"

"Now, Bertha, didn't I tell you never to mention that subject to me again. After yesterday's failures, and my consequent bad temper, how could you risk another storm?"

She crossed to the mantel-piece on which were some extraordinary looking negatives. She peered through them one by one, a half-angry, half-amused frown on the fair brow.

"We might find a photographer here, Miss Frances," suggested Bertha, "to give you some lessons."

"Bertha, what a brilliant idea! Let us go at once," said impulsive Frances, putting the plates down. "I'll have a regular course and perfect myself. I hate to be beaten. Oh! I forgot, you can't come. What a pity you slipped over those stones. Never mind; anyone can go out here alone."

Bertha demurred, but as usual the young mistress overruled, and was soon walking briskly along the parade, the bright, pretty colour flushing her cheeks, and a little of the old lustrous light shining in the great dark eyes at the prospect of something to do.

She turned off the parade presently, to wander about the little irregularly built streets, seeking for a photographer; but such was not to be found, although she did ultimately discover one that had been there. It was shut up now, and a big notice informed her that, "these premises are to be let during the winter."

Frances turned away in disgust, and slowly retraced her steps, wandering on along the parade till she was at the end. A pathway led on over the cliffs which she followed, caring little where she went. She had gone on for some distance, when suddenly a stooping figure attracted her attention. It was a man, and as he rose she saw he was adjusting a camera.

"Why, he must be a photographer. Oh, dare I speak to him?"

Her steps slackened as she puzzled over the sudden idea. But a longing for some amusement got the mastery of her better judgment. She was young and impulsive; it would be something to do, and, besides, he was only a photographer. As a man she never thought of him.

He had taken up his post on the edge of the cliff; and Frances, not wishing to pass before the camera and impede his view, was meditating slipping behind him, when the dog, seeing her loiter near, suspiciously growled.

His master looked quickly up, throwing off the enshrining velvet cloth, and so stood face to face with the object of his adoration. He divined her intention, but refused to allow her to carry it out. He had not even focussed his picture; she could certainly cross before him.

"I wish, that is, I mean," began Frances, finding that, after all, even a photographer, be he ever so far beneath the rank of General Tremeyer's daughter, was not very easy to speak to, as he stood there, with those clear blue eyes looking into hers, and the wintry sunlight gleaming on his glossy head. But she had explained it all at last, with many a quiet little word of help from him.

"I understand," he was saying, "that you wish for lessons until you are proficient in the art?"

"Yes, please," replied she, "if you can spare the time; but perhaps you are very



busy and may not care about it. You are a photographer?" she suddenly asked, looking straight up at the face that, somehow, did not seem to match the shabby clothes. That look convinced her. Whatever fortune had made him mattered not. Nature had formed him a gentleman. Just for one brief moment's space he hesitated; then came the words, slowly given,—

"Yes, I am a photographer, and very much at your service."

He stooped after speaking, to pick up a fallen screw, and when he once more stood upright there was a bright crimson streak flushing his forehead.

He asked her a few questions as he proceeded with the various adjustments, and she answered at first shortly and shyly; but by degrees the girlish frankness asserted itself, and they were soon chattering freely enough. No thoughts of propriety entered her head; and he—well, he knew there was no excuse for him thus taking advantage of a girl's innocence and guilelessness, but how could he resist the temptation? Was it not the realisation of his wildest, maddest dream, to be standing here, close beside her, looking into the fathomless eyes, with that strange, sorrowful expression in their depths, watching the pretty lips and the pearly teeth, hearing the sweet voice ask question after question, and then seeing her waiting for his replies?

He did not do much work that morning. If she could have guessed how the blood was bounding through his veins at fever-heat, causing his pulses to throb like sledge hammers, she might have understood his idleness, and viewed it in another light.

"I must go now," she said, after they had made every arrangement about the lessons, which were to begin that afternoon. She and Bertha were to go to his "dark-room" to receive instructions in "developing."

"Do you know I think I have seen you before?" she suddenly observed.

"Have you?" he said, starting not a little, and flushed in a confused way.

"I don't remember you," she said, with unconscious plain-spokenness that nearly made him smile, "but I am quite sure I recollect your dog."

"Ah, Tatters!" he exclaimed, relieved. "Where do you think Tatters has had the happiness—that is," pulling himself up, "Tatters is often about. He even went to the gates of the Photographic Exhibition when—"

"Oh yes, of course, it was there!" broke in Frances. "I knew I had seen him before. Well, good-bye, Tatters," and bowing gravely to Tatters's master she moved away.

He looked at his hand for a moment—the hand she did not touch at parting, and smiled.

"Ah, well, little lady, one step is accomplished, the rest will follow. 'Faint heart,' etc., and mine is not faint. Would she despise me if she knew the deceit I am practising upon her?"

He sighed ruefully as he collected his things, and then whistled to the dog.

"Come on Tatters! Lucky Tatters! We must go to prepare for visitors this afternoon. I must be careful what I say, and bear in mind that I am a photographer. Ought I to say 'ma'am, I wonder?'"

He laughed aloud as he strode along,—

"By Jove, I'll let her guess soon that I am down on my luck for a bit. What a thing pride is!"

The "first of the course" was a very quiet lesson, but as Frances and her maid walked home long the parade in the gathering twilight Bertha said,—

"Miss Frances, I think he's a gentleman, and not a photographer, miss."

"Mayn't a photographer be also a gentle-

man, Bertha?" asked her mistress, rather sharply. The same doubt had been haunting her all the afternoon.

"Well, yes, miss, in a way like, only—well, he is poor."

"Oh, Bertha," was the impatient answer, "you don't understand. Let us go and buy some muffins for tea. It is very cold; toasting them will warm us."

But no amount of muffin toasting and reading afterwards would drive away the vision of those blue, dauntless eyes and winning smile, and at last in despair she closed her book and went to bed.

"What would Katie say if she knew my thoughts?" she speculated, as she turned on her pillow.

A tall, closely buttoned up form, for the night was keenly cold, that had been pacing the parade before that lighted window, moved away as darkness fell upon the house, and vanished in the sea-mist hanging about.

"She is very proud, my little lonely lady. But the higher the climb the greater the reward! Hang Lady Julia, or, rather, may she soon be imprisoned in the bonds of matrimony!"

The next few days effected wonders in Frances. After all, the change was doing what she never meant it to do, and Breitreppé was no longer the "dead-and-alive place" she had in her disgust stigmatised it.

A wet morning had kept her indoors and she had been employing the time letter writing, but a weak gleam of sunshine made her pause and exclaim,—

"Oh, Bertha, we can get out after all! I can take my prints to the photographer. I am sure he will be pleased at the improvement. I will finish this letter speedily."

She had been spinning out a "gossip" to Mrs. Searlight, begun when first she came to Breitreppé. The opening pages were full of grumbles and "blues," but the tone had changed now in the most marked manner; and the recipient, reading it later on with her morning's early cup of tea, marvelled.

"What is this about a photographer?"

Where was I? Oh, yes, here. I am not nearly so dull now, for I am hard at work at my photography again, and shall surprise you with my specimens. When I was so 'blue' I suddenly was inspired to take lessons again. The only studio the place possesses is closed; but I have come across a travelling photographer staying here.

He says he is taking pictures for a firm. I do not think there is much subject matter here, but he seems quite satisfied; and now he has my lessons. He is very poor, I can see; and I am awkwardly situated, for I do not know how to pay him; and he is so strange about the matter I dare not mention it. Will you ask at Frith's, or somewhere, what they charge for an artist to go out lesson-giving? Oh, Katie, I wish he were not 'only' photographer; he is so nice! He is a perfect gentleman. I am sure he has a history, for, although he has the brightest face I ever saw, sometimes a shadow rests upon it. You can see it has only lately come there, for often the merry look lingers behind it, like the sun peering through a dim cloud. And his eyes! I can't tell you what they are like, for I never saw any so beautiful! Poor fellow! Perhaps he has lost his money, and people can't help being poor. It does not make them any the worse for that, except in the eyes of stupid old mercenary creatures. Indeed I don't think people are as nice for being rich. I know father is not what he used to be before Mrs. Tremeyer made him so wealthy."

Mrs. Searlight had worked herself up into too great an excitement to finish the letter. "I knew that girl would do something! But a photographer; Well, it might be

worse; and, anyway, it serves them very well right, banishing her like that just to please that detestable creature, Miss Stanhope! I must warn the General, though, for Frances' sake, or the poor dear will be falling hopelessly in love; and then—"

But she did not see the General that day, nor for many days, so the hint was not given, and Frances was left unmolested at Breitreppé, and the happy days of "love's awakening," sped on, each one laden with a bliss new and enchanting to the hitherto lonely, innocent maiden heart.

The letter finished, she and Bertha started off along the cliff to enjoy the gleam of sunshine knowing not that the only sunshine she really cared for now shone out from a bronzed, merry face.

They descended the steep little street, passed under the archway that spanned it just where the road slanted to the beach, and here they paused for Frances to exchange some words with "Uncle Tom," the old oyster vendor. Then on they went, up the chalky precipitous road out of the town, till Bertha, scanning the stormy sky, said warningly,—

"That cloud means rain, miss!"

The heavy, presaging drops fell rapidly, and they turned off the road, and made quickly for the shelter of the adjacent church porch.

Strains of music reached them through the red baize door as they sat on the rout seats scattered about; and Frances observed,—

"The organist practising, no doubt. Let us go inside, Bertha. It will not be so draughty as here."

The church was empty, and, save for those low sounds, very quiet—quiet with that exquisite hush no other place ever has.

Over in the left-hand corner was the organ, but only the keyboard and pedals; the pipes were overhead in the gallery.

A red curtain screen nearly hid the performer from view. Nothing was to be seen but a pair of broad shoulders and the back of a small head.

With a start of surprise the girl recognised her master—the travelling photographer!

Evidently he had not seen them, for he played on, all unconscious of his small audience; and Frances sat there in wrapt enjoyment of the exquisite strains, while the rain spent its fury on the roof overhead.

But he had finished now; and as the last notes died away he turned, swung his legs over the wooden bench, and so caught sight of Frances.

With a bewitching flush she hesitatingly advanced, remarking,—

"How can I thank you for such a treat? We are sheltered from the rain, and you have turned an otherwise tedious imprisonment into a delightful time!"

She had bowed in answer to his greeting, for no handshake had as yet passed between them—merely as pupil and teacher did they meet.

"Must you stop? It still rains very fast"

"If I can give you the slightest pleasure, Miss Tremeyer, gladly would I play all day."

His straight, glancing keen eyes scanned her as she leaned against a tall cabinet of music, his fingers wandering in musical harmonies over the keys, then he placed before him an old German song, converting it into a piece as he went on. And over his shoulder Frances read the words,—

"Be she high and far above me,  
As yonder stars, yea, higher,  
My love shall form the ladder,  
By which I shall aspire!  
Though fourfold dangers press me,  
Until the death I fight,  
But I will win and wear her,  
Her love I'll make my right!"

A glow came into those beautiful eyes as he turned them on her; his secret, could she have read it, blazing in them as he said,—

"Those were grand old times, when a man could fight until he won the prize he longed for."

"Oh, no!" said Frances, trembling beneath the ardent gaze, "not those days again! It might have been grand and exciting for the knights, but how about the maidens left behind? We hear nothing of their suspense."

"I had not of course, looked at it from that point of view," he replied, still watching the flushing, changing face. The achieving of their object so easily attracted me. I have something of the spirit of my forefathers, I suppose." He paused abruptly, and up to the roots of his hair surged the dark crimson token of excitement. He was forgetting his role. She would not credit him with ancestors. His feet scraped jarringly over the pedals as he swung himself out, saying, in a prosaic tone,—

"I think the rain must have ceased."

Frances was recalled to herself. With a strangely new sensation she walked down the aisle, out to the porch, only to find that the rain meant to imprison them for the rest of the day.

"I will fetch a cab," suggested the young man; and heedless of her remonstrances he started out, turning up his coat collar, and pulling down his hat. In an incredibly short space of time he returned, laden with umbrellas and cloaks.

"I couldn't find a cab, but your landlady gave me these."

"Have you been all the way to Sea View for them?" asked Frances, looking gratefully up at the glowing face.

"Oh, that was nothing!" laughing, as he helped her on with her wrap, and then turned to render like assistance to Bertha, and so winning her heart for ever.

He walked beside Frances down the steep hill to the street, holding the umbrella carefully over her, and so radiantly happy-looking that Bertha chuckled to herself and wondered what the General would say could he see.

At her door he left them, gently refusing Frances' offer of an umbrella. Perhaps this unconventional little walk had bewildered her, for as he was raising his hat to turn away she suddenly put out her hand with a frank spontaneity, and the next moment her strong brown fingers had closed round the cold, gloveless ones held out to him in a light pressure. Then she was gone, and there, on the pavement, lay her little wet glove. He picked it tenderly up and put it away in his pocket, heedless of the drenching rain pelting on him. His small room seemed all too narrow to hold him, and after his lonely dinner he started off over the hills for "a stretcher." When he returned it was night, and away over the sea flashed out the warning lights of the Badlost Sands, while every now and then through the darkness floated, like some lost wandering spirit, the strange weird radiance of the electric light from some outward-bound steamer. And in his head still rang the bold brave words,—

"My love shall form the ladder,  
By which I shall aspire!"

#### CHAPTER IV.

ONE frosty morning, a few days later, Frances and her maid left Trotbury station and took the road that led to the City. Bertha glanced at her young mistress now and then; she seemed in such glowing spirits, and her beauty had sudden blossomed out so marvellously.

"I think, Miss Frances, they will be

delighted to see how well you look when you go home!"

A quick pain darted through her. Go home! That meant the end of her lessons, the end of all! But she only said,—

"It's the improved weather, Bertha. Blue skies are always a good tonic."

All very fine, Miss Frances! Both the azure that lurked in a pair of dangerously fascinating eyes had more to do with it than nature, surely? Else, why this bewitching confusion, as a tall figure suddenly appeared, and the blue orbs flashed into hers, as their owner said,—

"You! In Trotbury! Miss Tremeyer."

"Might I not repeat the exclamation?" retorted she, looking so exquisitely pretty as almost to daze at him.

"Oh, it's a matter of common occurrence to me," he remarked, coolly, hiding from her the fact that he had seen her start from Brietreppe, and had made up his mind to go too, jumping into the last carriage as the train started. "All is fair in love," he soothed his conscience with.

He saw she could not hide the pleasure this meeting was to her, and his heart beat in heavy, almost suffocating sobs. Both felt some hitherto recognised boundary was broken down between them; the alluring sweetness of stolen waters was intoxicating them, yet neither could turn away from the delicious cup.

Frances was in rapture over the beauty of the cathedral, and gladly accepted his offered escort, listening to his voice in dreamy bliss, and yet hardly hearing the actual words he spoke.

"Now what shall we do?" she pondered, when they had seen all there was to be viewed.

Manlike, he proposed lunch, and Frances submitted to his suggestion, and was soon toasting her toes before a cheerful fire while the meal was in preparation.

Bertha alone had qualms of uneasiness. Still it was not her place to interfere, and who could say "nay" to such a pleasant-spoken young gentleman, who treated her mistress like a princess, and looked so devoted to her too!

When the merry meal was over he rose, quite naturally, to seek the waiter and then came the sharp awakening, for Miss Tremeyer handed him her purse, saying simply,—

"Will you kindly settle for me too, please?"

He bowed, but the agony of rebellion he endured was almost beyond endurance. Like a plunge into ice-cold water came the realisation that she looked upon him as the merest acquaintance—perhaps hardly that.

The old, sad expression returned, and Frances, grieving to see it there, was doubly bright and friendly, striving to drive it away, and win back the happy look he generally wore for her. It was a dangerous position. Awakened interest rarely stops till it has led to friendship or to love!

They were sauntering back after a visit to an old church, when, dashing towards them, came a dog-cart; and before Frances had time to turn away, one of its occupants was springing down, and there stood Sir Bernard Hawtrey beside her.

"Miss Tremeyer, by all that's lucky!"

The colour died out of her cheeks, and once again she was the pale, haughty girl of Manchester-square.

"How do you do, Sir Bernard?" she said defiantly, as he saw his gaze taking in the tall figure lingering near.

"I did not know you were staying here?" he went on, without heeding her question.

"Nor am I. You heard the plans for my banishment discussed; so you know I am at Brietreppe."

"I wish you had allowed me to be your escort over Trotbury."

"Thank you, but a friend has kindly undertaken that irksome task."

How that "friend" started as he heard the name by which she called him.

"However, I will detain you no longer; your horses may take cold," and she put out her hand with a decided air of dismissal.

One little shaft he hazarded.

"I shall be at the General's to-night. Any message?"

"None, thank you."

"Ah, well, he'll be delighted to hear how well and charming you look!" with such an audacious stare that the hot flush of anger dyed her cheeks, and her eyes darkened with indignation. "And I may add," with a meaning smile, "that you are well looked after—by your friends."

"Thank you," she said, with proud disdain. "My father knows the provision he made for my well-being when he sent me to Brietreppe, so your information will be superfluous."

With a haughty bow she turned away, and he watched her walk off beside her "friend," the tall, slight figure only reaching to the broad shoulders beside her.

But the spell was broken. The sun had set, the wind turned chilly, dusk was creeping on, and Frances said she was tired, and they would go home.

They wended their way to the station, and the young fellow saw them settled in a carriage, and, with one wistful look, was leaving them.

But, after his kindness, Frances could not let him go so.

"Will you not accompany us, Mr. Wentworth?"

She had never addressed him so before; but many things were different to-day.

Bertha, tired out, fell asleep, but they chatted on; and he told her a little of his life, with its blighting disappointment.

"And you are not really a photographer? and you have deceived me!" she exclaimed, flashing her stormy eyes into his. "Why did you do it? It was hardly fair!"

"Oh, forgive me! I know I have wronged you, and I justly deserve your anger; but do not cast me off altogether."

"Will you, then, explain the reason of this deception?"

"Miss Tremeyer, I can only throw myself upon your mercy, for I cannot yet explain my reasons! Will you, can you, trust me? Some day I may be able to tell you; now it is impossible. But oh! trust me!"

For a time silence reigned, as she realised the great question at stake. His eyes had spoken the love his lips refused to utter; and she knew, by the dull, aching agony at her heart, that "not wisely, but too well," she returned that unspoken, unoffered affection.

Then she raised her dark, gloomy eyes to his.

"I cannot trust. I must know, or not forgive!"

"And I—I dare not tell you!"

Not another word passed between them. There is an agony too deep for surface words, and such was theirs.

At the station they parted. Just for a moment her finger-tips rested in his; then their cab drove off, and he was left staring after it, his eyes wide and strained in their misery, his face so deathly pale that every vestige of colour had left even his lips.

He strode away, but it was many hours later ere he returned to the house, cold and tired, to find it all in darkness, his fire out, and Tatters asleep in his chair.

He roused the dog, and together they crept upstairs to bed. But the morning found him still awake.



"Well, Tatters," he said, as he sat at his solitary breakfast, "you and I must be on the tramp again. She won't want to see me any more. And I—oh, my darling, my lost darling!"

Frances was sitting over the fire next morning complaining of headache—and certainly those white cheeks and mournful eyes bore out her statement.

Suddenly the door burst open. A jovial voice cried,—

"Well, Frisco, glad to see dad again?" and General Tremeyer stood before her, his rather boisterous movements betokening some nervousness as he rattled on. "Hain't any idea it was such a hole as this. How you've managed to exist I can't think. You had better come back with me, eh?"

"Oh, yes, father, please! I can go to-day."

Anything to get away from the place now there was no longer a merry face and clear blue eyes to make it a little Eden for her.

"You don't look much better for your sojourn. I expected a rosy damsel to greet me, not a pale lily! Hawtrey told—"

"Oh, so you have seen Sir Bernard?" she asked, coldly and looking straight at him.

"Well, er—he—that is—yes. I saw him last night."

"And so you came down to investigate? Well, father, say all you have to say, please. I am ready."

"Well, he told me he met you in Trotbury with a—"

"Yes, quite right, with a friend."

"Oh, a man, he said, and you seemed rather chummy. Who was the man, Frances?"

"A pho—!" The words died on her lips. No, he was not that! The thought of how he had treated her simplicity turned her faint and cold.

"And what were you doing alone with him in Trotbury?"

"Alone! Did Sir Bernard say that?"

"Yes, he did, and I wondered what madness you were up to!"

"And you believed I would go out alone with any man. Oh? father!"

The hot tears rushed to her eyes, overflowed, and the next moment she was sobbing it all out on her father's shoulder.

He was as indignant as his placid nature would allow, but told her to run away and see after her things.

Just after she left the room a maid brought in a parcel.

"Please, sir, it's Miss Tremeyer's photo things."

"Ah, all right. Wait, tell the messenger there will be an answer."

He opened his daughter's writing-case, scrawled a few lines, then taking a bit of paper out of his pocket-book, slipped it in, and sealed the envelope.

"There, that will settle it. My poor little Frisca!"

Standing at the low window, with faithful Tatters beside him, Will Wentworth watched the return of his messenger. As he caught sight of the dainty-looking paper his brain reeled, but the writing was not hers. Tearing it open a crisp bit of paper flew out and fell at his feet. He stooped, picked it up, while the hot blood mounted in a scorching flush to his brow. He realised the fact that he had been paid.

"General Tremeyer begs to thank Mr. Wentworth for the lessons in photography he has given to his daughter, and hopes the enclosed will cover all expenses. General Tremeyer leaves Breitreppe immediately, so no acknowledgment need be made."

The crimson torrent surged back again, and now he was deadly pale, that lifeless white which tells the very heart-throbs are affected. Tatters, guessing something was wrong, stalked heavily round his master,

waiting till that awful expression had softened. Then Will smoothed out the crumpled papers, put them carefully away, and patted the dog.

And that was the end of "Love's Young Dream!"

It rained heavily as the Tremeyers drove to the station. Frances shut her eyes as they went along the parade, barely hearing her father tell her how he had found out "Uncle Tom's Cabin," and that the oysters were so delicious that he had ordered a bag to be sent up. They had not arrived when they had left, but as they sat waiting for the train to start the old man came hurrying in with beaming face and rain-soaked garments. Frances leaned out of the window to attract his attention, and so caught sight of a tall, long-coated figure stepping into a compartment at the further end, closely followed by a huge brindled bull-dog.

She sat back, that deadly faintness creeping over her again, while her father chaffed old "Uncle Tom" till they left.

"There, all is settled now," said her father, sitting back. "And I squared it up neatly with your photographer, Frisca."

"Father, what have you done?"

The girl sat up, the colour coming and going fitfully in her cheeks, and her eyes sad and miserable.

"Well, you see, it was a ticklish thing to do, for you say he is a gentleman, and Hawtrey says he is uncommonly shabby, so I just wrote a line of thanks and popped in a 'flver.' What's up, little one?"

"My head—the train jolts so—"

The sentence remained unfinished. Frances Tremeyer had fainted.

## CHAPTER V.

"WELL Frances, so you have escaped! And how are the wedding arrangements progressing? I suppose everything at sixes and sevens!"

"Sixteens and seventeens you mean! Save me from a wedding! I never mean to marry; but if I did it should be quietness itself."

"Never marry! What nonsense! But all girls say that. I did till I met Jack, but never after. And a little bird has told me that Miss Tremeyer has been proving herself an expert at flirting."

The pretty colour stained the cheeks that were not so rounded as of yore. "Love's awakening" had left its traces.

"A flirt? No, I don't think so. Mrs. Tremeyer said I was a success, and if having always partners means 'success' then I was."

"And," asked Mrs. Searight, "among the 'crowds' wasn't there one chosen one?"

Directly she spoke she regretted it, for the look that swept across the girl's face, like some dimming shadow, told her Frances had not yet learnt to forget.

She did not reply to the question, only said,—

"I made a friend, Kate? Oh, such a nice man. Do you know him? A Mr. Wyndham?"

"Dallas Wyndham! Oh, very well. Poor Dallas! He has a sad story. The girl to whom he was engaged was burnt to death, and the were so fond of each other."

"Kate! How horrible!"

"Oh, awful. He nearly lost his reason, and has never been the same since. That happened eight years ago. I wonder will he fall in love again? He is a thoroughly good fellow, and worthy of any girl's love, her first and best."

"Yes, Kate, he is," said Frances, quietly; "and that is why I would not be to him anything but a friend."

"Did he ask you? And you refused! Oh, were you wise?"

A brilliant flood of colour rose to the sad face.

"I have no 'first and best' love to give him or any man. I told him so, but begged him still to be my friend, for I have not many, and he has promised to be my friend. He is good and kind; but—oh, Kate, help me—help me!"

And to Mrs. Searight's unbounded astonishment the girl suddenly fell on her knees beside her, and burying her face, sobbed bitterly.

"Frances, don't cry so! Oh, my poor child! I did hope this gay Christmas had made you forget."

"Forget! Why, of course, I am forgetting! What is there to remember?" she exclaimed, springing up, and mopping her eyes. "But yesterday, when I was driving up Bond Street with Mrs. Tremeyer, I saw—I saw—" the tears broke forth again.

"If he only had not looked so ill!"

"But this will never do, Frisca," said Mrs. Searight. "You must not let a hopeless infatuation ruin your life. Rarely does a girl marry her first fancy."

"Oh, I shall get over it. Father tells me I must make a grand match, 'go where money is,' as he has little to give me. Wait till the season begins, and I get into the swing of it, and have no time to think, and I'll soon forget."

A bright spot burned on each cheek, her great eyes glittered hard and clear like diamonds, and she laughed—oh, what a laugh—as she ran upstairs to bathe her eyes, so as to accompany Mrs. Searight on her shopping expedition.

Frances chose to wait outside in the carriage for her friend, dreamily watching the passers-by, utterly heedless of the admiring glances the beautiful sad face attracted.

"Oh, Miss Frances, what a pleasure!" exclaimed a deep voice beside her, and Mr. Wyndham stepped into the waiting victoria.

"Well, and what news of the bride-elect? Is she in the seventh heaven?"

"Are people generally there who are going to marry? I read the other day of a girl who called it 'joining the noble army of martyrs!'"

"Ha, ha!" laughed Wyndham; "but in this case I fancy Hawtrey will enact that role."

"Why won't you come as guest to the church, Mr. Wyndham?"

She was sorry she had asked the question, as she saw his face pale; but he only said,—

"Those shows are not in my line. But I'll come to yours, Frances," with a sudden, swift smile at her.

"Mine! I'll never tax your friendship that far! I have no thought of joining that army. It—ah!"

Every vestige of colour suddenly left her cheeks, and she hurriedly put up her muff to her face as if she felt cold.

"What is it?"

He looked over his shoulder, following her gaze, but was too late to notice a tall figure in a shabby coat vanishing down a side street.

"Oh, nothing; only a twinge of toothache—gone now. Ah! here comes Katie!"

But when he left them her lips were still white, though she talked and laughed bravely enough, and he knew it was something more than "toothache" that had robbed them of their scarlet hue.

There was quite a crowd gathered outside St. Peter's Church next day to watch the grand wedding, and the people waited patiently enough in the biting wind for a glimpse of "beauty adorned."

Among them stood Dallas Wyndham, and behind him, looking over his shoulder, a tall, splendid figure, with set blue eyes and compressed white lips.

Down the aisle and out into the porch came the procession. Off drove the bride, smiling and elated, and then there was a moment's delay over the arrival of the next carriage, and Frances and her partner waited in the porch. She was speaking to her companion, the sweet mouth wreathed in smiles as she raised her head, and suddenly once more a pair of brown eyes looked straight into a pair of blue ones.

She shivered from head to foot, causing her partner to hurry her forward to the carriage, saying,—

"You are taking cold, Miss Tremeyer!"

Mr. Wyndham, marvelling at the change on her face, heard his friend behind him whisper,—

"Get me out of this, old fellow—anywhere! I can't see! Be quick, or I shall make a fool of myself."

He gripped his arm firmly, and led him quickly away.

"I told you not to come, Will! This east wind is enough to touch up anyone, let alone a fellow not well from congestion! It was madness!"

"It's not the wind! I am on fire, Dallas! But that was she! And I have lost her!"

"Phew!" whistled Mr. Wyndham. "Frances Tremeyer, is it, who has done for you? Poor old fellow!"

His own face was very pale now as he saw a possible temptation likely to waylay him, and for a moment he felt "done for" too! but it was conquered, and the arm holding on to Will's was strong and true to him once more.

When Dallas Wyndham returned to his rooms, which Will now shared, late that day, he found him fast asleep in the arm-chair, and old Tatters sitting up beside him, his head resting on his master's stretched out knees. He had not even removed his overcoat, and as Wyndham bent over to rouse him he saw the long dark lashes were strangely bright.

"Dear old W. W. breaking his heart over a girl! And yet they are worthy of each other! I must find some means of bringing them together, and see if I can't manage to invent a relationship between her and me, and so dowry the bride. I have money and cannot win the only thing I care for; he has none, and so cannot also win the one thing he wants. Will—hi! wake up, old chap, and come out with me somewhere for a feed. Let us hope matrimony is more digestible than the cake!"

Not a few had felt full of envy of the lovely chief bridesmaid that day, who had looked so radiant, and had all that could be desired; but perhaps they would have changed their minds if they could have seen her in her room that night. As charity covers a multitude of sins so do riches hide a world of miseries. She had flung aside her pretty gown, and was kneeling by her bed, heavy sobs shaking her from head to foot.

"I must, I will forget him!" she moaned. "Oh! how utterly I despise myself! If only he had looked happy, and as he used to do. But he didn't. He looked miserable, sad and old, and so much thinner. Oh, why was I so harsh, so cruel, so unforgiving! And now there is no help!"

Those great blue eyes, with that shadows of suffering in them that seemed to darken their clear depths for ever, haunted her all through that weary, endless night. And that was how she set about forgetting.

#### CHAPTER VI.

Mr. WYNDHAM came hurrying up the

great stone staircase to his flat with an eager, anxious look on his calm, impassive features.

"Ah, you are back, Wentworth I couldn't get away sooner," he said, addressing the young fellow, who was moodily staring from the window, his hat pushed back from his knitted brows, and his hands thrust deep in his coat pocket.

"Well, old fellow, you have had news, I see!"

"Yes, Dallas, bad!" was the reply, given in such a tone of lifeless despair that for a moment Wyndham could not speak. He only put both hands on the tall shoulders in mute sympathy, and waited till Will went on,—

"What a fool I've been ever to hope that a man, with a temper like the devil's own, could relent! All this time wasted!"

"Another will had been made?"

"Yes, made, drawn out and gloated over, doubtless, not a week after the row. When he sent word to stop my allowance no mention of this was made to Rankens, and he evidently was ashamed of the part he was enacting, for he had employed another firm of solicitors, and they were instructed to send the will to Rankens on his death. There is not even the proverbial shilling for me. I am totally ignored. There might be no grandson at all!"

"It's a thousand pities, old boy you couldn't have done—"

"Dallas! You say that! Marry a woman years older than myself whom I hardly knew!"

"Opportunities would have altered that objection."

"Pshaw! Just to please an old tyrant. Well, he is dead. I don't care for great possessions. I didn't want Cheshmere to be joined to anything. However, that is beside the question. He forced my mother into a loveless marriage for money that broke her heart. Then I was packed off to Harrow. We met there, Dallas," with a glance that spoke volumes. "And you were staying at Cheshmere when the news came of that mad outbreak at Monaco, when my father lost every farthing of his fortune. I bore you with these allusions; but bear with me, old chap; it will soon be over."

He broke off and gazed listlessly out at the passing traffic and the gay throng to which he had once belonged—was it centuries ago?—but which would know him no more. And she was one of that magic circle, that upper ten thousand! Ah, well, come what might, defrauded of everything, he still had his storehouse of memories, and into the guarded fortress could no one break through and steal.

"If I could only get some downright hard work to do! I can endure this life no longer. I am afraid it must be the King's shilling, since he has even grudged me that much. It will be all the same a hundred years hence, and many a more deserving chap has gone under. You have done your best for me, dear old friend, but I am a failure."

Their hands met in a silent grip, for in moments of intense feeling words fail.

Then Will spoke up again, this time more brightly.

"Guess where the money goes, Dallas?" "Don't insult me by imagining I could guess the workings of a mind like the late—H'm, as you say, he is dead. What is it, Will, Where?" asked he, quickly, for over the other's face a slow, strange smile had crept.

"All the fortune, every cent, and Cheshmere have been left to Frances Middleton Tremeyer!"

He said the name bravely, with a tender inflexion in his voice that caused Wyndham's

heart to ache for him; but one hand gripped the window-ledge as if meeting the support it gave.

"To her! By Jove!"

"Yea, even so. So, after all, I can give her something. She has the fortune now without the encumbrance. Fancy a pauper, for so I was all the time, falling in love! Well, I am glad, and soon I shall be content."

His voice was getting huskier and huskier, and the last few words were but a whisper.

"Oh, Dallas, how I have lost her!"

"You love her as madly as ever, Will?"

"Love her!"

He turned away, crossed over to the mantel-piece, and buried his face in his hands, while Wyndham stood wrapt in anxious thought.

He could have laughed aloud at the awkwardness of the situation did not his heart ache too intensely for his friend's trouble.

That Frances Tremeyer would never touch the money did she know she was defrauding anyone of their just, if not exactly legal, rights he was certain; but she did not know, and it was a delicate matter to handle. And Will was such a "proud beggar" he would never accept anything from anyone, much less from her!

"But can this be, Will? Is there none of your mother's money left that he dare not touch?"

Will came across to the window, answering,—

"As far as I can make out everything went in the Monaco smash. My father was always a one-idea'd tyrant, and liked to have her asked him for money even after her marriage, and then he gave just what he liked. He grew to be a perfect miser latterly, so that there must be a good accumulation for his god-daughter."

It's no use moaning now, but I wish I had had more patience with the poor old fellow. He died quite alone, only his valet with him. I had one crumb of comfort. Brander has paid up that thousand, so I have something to start on. And Ranken was kindness itself, asked me if I'd care to leave England. I said 'like a shot,' so he told me of an opening he knew of in the Cape Mounted Police, and with his influence I am sure to drop in for that. Kind of him, wasn't it? Don't you approve, Dallas?" seeing a queer look on the quiet face opposite.

"Oh, Will, Will, you never will understand your worth! How about the parting? Do you expect me to approve of that?"

"Don't speak of that yet! It will come soon enough, when old W. W. will no more trouble you." He spoke lightly, because he dare not trust himself to do otherwise.

"But I must go. That life will suit me, and besides I dare not risk seeing her. If I am to get over it I must remove all chance of that."

Mr. Wyndham flung up the window as if he needed air, and was soon lost again in thought—sad, perplexing thought, the heavily knitted brows betokened. Will joined him there after a series of strides up and down the room.

"Dallas, does she know you and I are friends?"

"I told her so the day of the wedding. I don't see the way clear yet, Will; but one thing I know—she loves you!"

"She—loves—me! Oh, what have I done! I never dreamt of that! I thought the little interest I had aroused had been killed in that last interview, and that by now she would have forgotten there ever was such a scamp."

Wyndham smiled.

"Ah, Will, women are incomprehensible,



and their love—thank Heaven it is so!—is as far above ours as Heaven is above earth. They don't often love wisely, or to their own advantage, or not many men would be blessed. Their love has in it something of the higher love, and the worthless ones get their share with the best. Not that that applies to you. You know my opinion of you. I know her now, and I think you are made for one another."

Again silence fell between them, broken at last by the younger man.

"I must go for a 'stretcher,' Dallas, so expect me when you see me."

"All right. Don't overdo it. Remember the C. M. P. require toughened articles," he said, as he watched him muzzling Tatters.

"Since I could not win her for myself," said the now solitary occupant of the room. "I must do my best to get her for him!"

\* \* \* \* \*

"Dallas, do you think you could manage something for me?" asked Will, looking across the dining-table at his friend.

"What is it? I'll do my best, Will. I have been wondering why that piece of bread was being so tortured; now I am to hear!"

"I want to go with you to-night."

"Go! That's right old fellow. Glad to hear you express a rational wish. Go and don your war-paint and I'll smuggle you in. Mrs. Cholmondeley and I are old friends, so it's easily done."

"I suppose I am crazy," observed Will, as the hansom spun along to the scene of the ball, "but I long for another sight of her. I hung about the Park for hours yesterday, and she never came. And I have never seen her in all her beauty, except that misty peep through the carriage-window at the Drawing-room."

"Is it wise, old fellow?"

"Wise? Was I ever celebrated for wisdom? When a man is going to be buried alive, one more act of madness counts little. I have suffered all I can. I don't think I can feel any more."

"You don't want to dance, Will?" asked Wyndham, as they threaded their way through the throng.

"Oh, by Jove, no! I feel rather like Romeo entering Capulet's house, and half wish I had a mask. But they are all too busy to notice me. You go your way; I'll manage all right."

Wyndham looked at him, and could not help smiling at the idea of that tall, splendid figure and bright peculiarly winning face escaping notice.

If she sees him to-night, as he looks now, I think when next they meet there will be no more talk of the Cape.

"Ah, Miss Tremeyer, how fortunate I am to find you so soon!"

"You are very late; and I have kept two dances for you," she pouted.

"That is kind!" said he, absently. "I'll put my name down. Ah! I see you have given Searight one too," mentally deciding that then would be the time.

He sought out Mr. Searight, and a hasty  *tête-à-tête*  explained matters to Jack.

"But I say, Wyndham, suppose she faints? girls are queer creatures, and always do something 'ram'?"

"Never fear, Frances is too proud for that. It will be a shock to her, but I'll risk that; and I'll tell Kate to watch her."

"If old Tremeyer finds out we are planning to bring her and that 'photographer fellow' together, there will be a jolly old row!"

"I'll risk that to gain them happiness," was the brief answer.

Mr. Searight presently claimed Frances for their dance, feeling as he were a

member of a Nihilist "group" and had been "cast" to do the fatal deed.

To Miss Tremeyer's surprise, he was tired before they made the circuit of the room.

"You tired! Oh, you cannot be well!"

"It's the heat, I think. The place is like an oven. It looks cool in here."

Frances laughed as they entered the conservatory.

"Fancy us doing the sentimental in a cool retreat! Oh! what a lovely palm-tree!"

But Jack was much too nervous to admire palm-trees, or any other kind of trees.

He saw no sign of a lurking Romeo, and began to feel uneasy.

They paused by a sparkling fountain surrounded by tropical trees of luxuriant growth; and there on the further side, with the dividing waters between them, poor, broken-hearted Will feasted his eyes upon this glimpse of his love in all the triumph of her radiant beauty.

Her gown was of purest white gleaming silk, covered here and there with filmy lace; the exquisite neck and arms seemed nearly as white as the enshrouding lace. Round her throat flashed a row of diamonds, the dark glossy coils of hair scintillated with the same sparks of fire; and, yet, more beautiful than them all, were the deep, glowing "jewels of sight," her splendid eyes!

"This will make you cool Jack! It is delicious!" she said, pulling off her long glove, and holding out her hand to catch the drops as they fell.

With a little laugh she took a step nearer; and Will, in a moment of alarm that she should see him, drew back, the leaves of a tree behind rustled, and Frances looked up.

All the colour left her cheeks, her lips, even, grew white, as, bending still more forward, with her great, dark eyes dilating, she gazed as if petrified at the figure standing there.

Poor Mr. Searight was at his wits end.

"Bother Wyndham! A plague take all lovers! They never told me what I was to do! Good gracious; she is going to faint! I knew she would!" he thought, horrified, as he saw her trembling from head to foot, and yet seemingly unconscious of the shivers.

He touched her arm gently, saying,—

"Frances, what is it? Are you cold? I thought you would be chilled, playing with that water."

His words recalled her to herself. The shivers ceased, and she drew a long breath as he, with feigned surprise, exclaimed,—

"By Jove! was someone there? That sounded like a step!"

"Oh, no; imagination. But I have seen a ghost, and they don't tread noisily. It was not a pleasant surprise, and I hope never to have such another. Please let us go back to the warmth and light of an everyday world!"

Her eyes glittered hard and cold; her erstwhile pale cheeks were flushed into burning spots of colour, and she gave a bitter little laugh.

Not even yet had she learned to forget!

## CHAPTER VII.

"BUT what has put this idea into your head, Frances?"

"Oh, many things, Mr. Wyndham. You know I have told you from the first that I never felt the money belonged to me. I was quite sure Mr. Middleton had some relations whom he was angry with, or something, because he never used to even hint at leaving me anything much, except some jewellery; and then, that boy. I can't forget that boy!"

Frances and Mr. Wyndham were sitting

together in Kate Searight's pretty conservatory at one of her afternoon cruises.

"Boy! What boy?"

"Haven't I told you? Oh, I thought I had. I have told father about it so often. Do you know," dropping her voice, and leaning towards him—"please don't think me wicked and suspicious, but I can't help thinking father does not believe it is all right, for he never will let me go to see the lawyers. And when I talk about this boy he gets angry, and scoffs at my imagination. Yes; now about the boy. You know I often used to go and stay with old Mr. Middleton when I was a child, and father was away, and I did not like it much, it was so dreadfully lonely—never anyone there; and I asked him couldn't he get me someone to play with, and he said, 'One at a time is enough,' so I imagined he had a family somewhere that he saw by degrees. One day, in the billiard-room cupboard, I found a lot of boy's things; and after that I used to dress a brush up with that coat and cap, and play ball with it, and call it 'Jack.' Jack became a very real playfellow, and I used to talk to him by the hour. You see, I was desperately lonely!"

"So you think that boy is a relation?"

"Don't you think it points to that? And I always feel the money is not mine! I have begged father to try and find out who that boy is, for he may be poor, and I may be defrauding him, or, at any rate, for the sake of the happiness he unconsciously gave me in my childhood, I should like to go shares!"

"Oh, dear, generous little girl!" he said, as he put his hand lightly on her head. "So if this someone turned out to be a badly-treated heir, what would you do?"

"Do! Give it him all back, and perhaps—perhaps be happy at last! Oh, you are my friend. Will you promise now to help me?"

"Say, will you promise, Dallas?"

"Dallas!" she whispered. A sudden remembrance of when that promise had been given flashed upon her, and she put out her hand and laid it gently on his.

"Thank you, dear, for that word. I once foolishly aspired to fill a higher, nearer post than friend. Well, let that pass, it was not to be; but whoever may claim it in the future rest assured you will always have one lifelong friend to do you service."

He stooped and pressed a long kiss on the pure white brow—a kiss of renunciation, and then offering her his arm, led her back to the crowded drawing-room, leaving her close by her father's side.

"Oh, Kate, isn't it kind of Mr. Wyndham! I love so having tea in his rooms, and it is such a long time since he asked us. Of course, he had that sick friend here I daresay that prevented him. I wonder has he any special reason now? Why do you smile, Kate?"

"Oh, nothing! Most people always have reasons for sending out invitations for tea?"

"No, only he made rather a point of it."

Mr. Wyndham met them in the doorway with his usual kind, quick smile.

"Oh, how beautifully you have decorated the room with flowers!" exclaimed Frances, wandering round on a tour of inspection. "Why, what queer boots, and what a funny hat!" they suddenly heard her say, "do they belong to you?"

Dallas rose and walked towards her, his face pale and stern, for he knew he had news to tell her, to-day that would put her ever beyond his reach.

"No, they belong to an outfit."

"An outfit! Is someone going away?" she asked, soberly.

"Yes, a friend of mine leaves shortly to join the Cape Mounted Police."

"A friend of yours? And you are sorry?" she said, looking quickly up at the still face above her. "Then I am sorry too, for you. Must he go?"

"Yes, Frances; he must go, because he has lost all his money."

"Oh, how grieved I am!—And I have just got over so much more than I want!"

"Well, if you will come over here and have some tea I will tell you something about him, if you care to hear."

"Of course, I shall like to hear of anything that you are interested in," she said, smiling up at him.

She little knew how hard that swift sweet smile of hers had made the telling to him.

Frances took the cup of tea he offered her, and then choosing a tempting little cake, she sat down on a low chair on one side of the hearth, and leaned her head against the old oak fireplace.

"Do you remember a little chat we had together one day about your fortune?" he began.

"My fortune! How uninteresting!"

For a moment the girl looked puzzled, then suddenly,—

"Oh, Dallas!" she exclaimed. "I guess! Are you going to tell me of a plan by which I can give some of it to this friend of yours? I am sure it would be far nicer than bestowing a thanksgiving tithe on our church, as Mr. Cuthbert says I ought to do."

Kate Searight laughed heartily; but Mr. Wyndham only put out one hand, and lightly touched the soft, dark head.

"Little Quixote!"

"Don't call me names like father does, please," interrupted the girl.

"Don't be afraid. I have not the slightest intention of doing so, you little firework!" he said, in an amused tone. "Well, and what if I did say I thought you might certainly give some to him? My dear child, your people would never consent to such philanthropy! You were not of age, and your father might certainly and reasonably object."

"You are teasing her, Dallas. Tell her now," said Mrs. Searight, who appeared to be unusually nervous this afternoon, and who kept glancing at the clock.

"Playing about the bush never did for me, Frances. I have something to tell you," he began, very gravely, "a something that may alter your whole life, perhaps entirely change it."

Her face paled perceptibly at his low-spoken words. She set down her cup hastily, and put up one hand between her and the blaze.

"Will you tell me, please, what you mean?" she asked, in a rather breathless little voice.

"I have found out that Mr. Middleton has an heir, who has a nearer claim to the property."

"Oh! is that all?"

The relief was so great that for a moment she seemed barely able to grasp the news; and Mr. Wyndham said across to Mrs. Searight,—

"A novel way of receiving the news that one's fortune is in jeopardy."

Frances' first thought was,—

"Oh! how vexed father will be! And does this friend of yours know I have got his money?"

"My dear Frances," interrupted Mrs. Searight, "you speak as if you were a thief! It is your money fairly enough, and not many would talk so lightly of giving it up."

"My friend certainly knows it has been willed away to a certain Frances Tremeyer, Mr. Middleton's god-daughter."

"And is that why he is leaving England?"

"Yes, partly. You see he was always brought up as his grandfather's heir, for he is a grandson."

"A grandson! Then I expect he is my 'Jack!'"

Mrs. Searight smiled at the possessive adjective, it was so applicable.

"And you say I may see him?—the boy who used to go to Chestermere when I was not there, and cut up all my dolls, or hang them on the orchard-trees? Oh! what fun!"

"Yes, you may certainly see 'your Jack!'" He passed his fingers across his moustache and glanced comically at Mrs. Searight. "But do be serious now, Frances. I told you this because you held my promise that I would help you to find out if there was anyone who had any right to the whole or part of this money. But, remember, you need not give it up. It is a large fortune to play 'pitch-and-toss' with in this reckless fashion. Money is a good possession, and a great essential to one's comfort and happiness."

"Oh, please don't read me a sermon when I am all excitement to see 'Jack.' I have a thousand things to ask him about. Will he be here to-day?"

"I am expecting him every minute."

"Dallas," broke in Mrs. Searight, irrelevantly, "you promised me I might have a chat with Mrs. Smith on household affairs. Can I see her now?"

"Certainly. I'll conduct you to the lower regions now. I will soon be back, Frances. Meanwhile, please excuse me, and amuse yourself with a further examination of my friend's 'goods and chattels.'"

He paused at the door to glance back at her, and something in his face made Mrs. Searight say with a sigh,—

"Oh, Dallas, how I wish you—"

"Kate, wishes that are never to be fulfilled are best left unexpressed. Happy Will! I wish him success!"

The room was growing dusky now, only the fire threw gleams of brightness about. Frances went over to the couch where the "queer boots and funny hat" reposed, and took them up one by one. Doubly interesting were they now she knew it lay in her power to make them useless to their owner.

"I wonder would it suit me?" she said, as she held the helmet poised on her hand. She returned to the hearthrug, and putting it on her soft, dark masses of hair, gazed at herself in the mirror, laughing quietly at her strange reflection. "Oh! how absurd and incongruous it looks! I'd do for Joan of Arc capitally. Oh, Dallas!"

The opening door caused the confused ejaculation. To be caught openly admiring oneself is embarrassing. A tall figure was groping it way to the fireplace. It was too dark to distinguish features, but something in the build of that figure warned her it was not her host.

Then, of course, it must be "Jack," Mr. Middleton's grandson; and to hide her nervousness she plunged into speech, forgetting that probably his name was neither Jack nor Middleton.

"Oh, are you Jack, who used to go to Chestermere, and with whose things I have so often played? I—"

The sentence died away at its birth, for the new-comer stood just where the firelight caught the pale, set features and misery-filled eyes.

"You! I—" She could say no more.

"Miss Tremeyer!" burst from the young man, as he recoiled, in his overpowering surprise, and seized the back of a tall chair for support.

Frances gave a weak, nervous laugh, and then hurriedly began to explain.

"I am here with Mrs. Searight taking

tea. It has gone downstairs. I mean Mrs. Smith. No, not that. They, Kate and Dallas—oh! Mrs. Searight and Mr. Wyndham have gone to house-keep."

She broke down utterly and covered her face with her hands to hide the burning blushes that rose to the roots of her hair. A most painful silence reigned till he could endure it no longer. At any cost he must speak.

"I beg your pardon for intruding. It was most accidental. I thought the room was empty, and the guests were gone. Wyndham did not tell me who is guests were to be or, pray believe me, this would not have occurred."

The voice was icy cold, and the words quietly spoken. Frances shivered, and slowly took down her trembling fingers, and her face now was as white as his own.

"Mr. Wyndham has not been fair to either of us," she said, trying to steady her quivering lips. Then as a sudden, awful idea occurred to her she said,—

"Please do not go. I want very much to speak to you."

"He paused then, for he had already taken a few lingering steps down the room. Though it was torture to meet her so, yet was it torture doubled a thousandfold not to see her at all."

"Tell me," she began in her pretty, imperious way. "is it you who are going to the Cape?"

That word recalled to her memory the foolish act in which he had surprised her. Quickly she put up her hand. Oh, what must he be thinking! His helmet still jauntily reposed upon her curly locks. She dragged it off with a bewitching air of blushing confusion; rumpiling the glossy coils as she did so, but only adding to her loveliness thereby. He took it from her, murmuring,—

"I thank you. You have increased its value more than I dare tell you."

"Ah, then it is you! And you are going to be a policeman!"

He could not prevent the smile that overspread his face, and lighted up his eyes.

"Oh, do not be afraid, I shall not 'run you in!' I am not qualified for duty, so you are safe."

"Now am I sure you are Mr. Middleton's grandson and 'Jack!'" No, of course you don't understand me. I will explain. You took me greatly by surprise when you entered. I expected someone quite different, because Mr. Wyndham had been telling me about the real heir."

She paused as she caught a stifled ejaculation. So the secret was out, and Wyndham had turned traitor.

"I ought to have been told! Did you think I was satisfied to take the money, never asking one question? I have been trying to find you out, not as you," quickly flushing, "but as a probable someone turned out of their rights. And to think it should be you! Oh! I am punished! How you must despise me, laugh at me!"

She broke down, completely overcome by a burst of hysterical sobs that she vainly strove to subdue. He felt utterly at a loss. Though longing to take her in his arms, and kiss away her tears, he yet would not speak one word of comfort. Only by perfect stillness could he stem the torrent of passionate love that rushed to his rigid lips. But the veins on his forehead stood out like blue cords, and swelled into ropes on his hands and wrists.

But soon her stronger nature reasserted itself, and she sat up, pushed back the thick hair from her temples, and rubbed her eyes in a matter-of-fact way, trying to make him think she was quite at her ease again.

"You must think I am an escaped lunatic



but will you let me tell you what it means, and I will make myself—"

"Miss Tremeyer could not make herself anything but perfection."

She sprang up.

"I deserve those words, Mr. Wentworth, and harsher, crueller ones, but the sarcasm lurking beneath them adds to their sting. Be satisfied you have revenged yourself by them."

"Miss Tremeyer! I revenge myself on you! Do you think me capable of that? We—you must excuse me. I dare not stay here longer, or I shall betray myself."

Was he going to speak? Ah, had he only looked he must have seen the love shining in her eyes.

Again she detained him, and with many breakdowns and in low sweet tones told him all the childish story of her boy friend "Jack."

When she had finished, he said,—

"Now, will you, for the sake of 'Jack,' spare one kindly thought to his unworthy representative? After to-day you will never see him again." There was a quick start on her part, and her hands looked themselves together. "And I am deeply sorry for the disillusion, Wyndham should never have allowed it; but will you try to forget this interview, and think of me still as 'Jack'?"

"But there is the money! You must take the money, for it is yours!"

"Never!"

"So sharply rang out the word that she looked up at him.

"I could never touch one farthing of your money. Do you remember when you last gave me money? As long as life lasts will the recollection of that moment remain with me—a punishment for my mad folly!"

"Mr. Wentworth!" putting up her hand to her collar as if it stifled her, "did you think I knew of or sanctioned that?"

"You did not?"

"No," in the softest whisper.

"Oh, if I had known that all this weary time!"

"Would it have made much difference to you?"

"Difference!" And then the bounds he had set himself were broken; the might of his love overwhelmed them. Once more the bonny blue eyes shone with their old lustre and masterful power into hers, forcing from them the secret her lips could not tell. And for her love he would not ask, because it meant the money, too!

"When a man tells his love, does he stop at the telling? Does he never want an answer?"

"Miss Tremeyer, Frances, my darling, do you know what you are making me think? Oh, I dare not let myself believe it."

For reply she moved more closely to him, whispering,—

"The money and I are inseparable. I have offered you the one. Can you not understand?"

"Oh, my darling, won at last!"

"I think I have always been won. But I was very nearly lost through your blindness, Will!"

"Hallo! you two in a dark room!" suddenly sounded Dallas Wyndham's cheerful voice.

"Oh, Frisca is fond of that apartment," laughed Mrs. Searight.

"Well, we have given you sufficient opportunity to develop something. Is the money question settled?"

"Oh, Dallas! we owe it all to you," said Will.

For answer he stooped and kissed the beautiful trembling lips, saying,—

"Heaven bless you both, my dear friends!"

[THE END.]

## Society

THE German Emperor, in allowing his beard to grow, puts himself into competition with the majority of European monarchs. "The beard movement," an enthusiastic Englishman wrote early in this century, "ought rapidly to swell into a revolution." It is a sort of revolution in which a king or a king's heir has taken part. In Germany they are being reminded that the fashion of shaving is, after all, of French setting. Louis was beardless by nature; and therefore courtiers shaved. The barbers, one imagines, will know how to meet high sophistry like this, as also to issue a counterblast to the rhetoric which denounces the man who shaves away "his neck and earlands' comforter, his natural respirator, his chapped lips protector, his toothache's anodyne."

THE bed chamber which the Tzar occupied at Compiegne is furnished after the manner of the first Empire. Nicholas II. slept in Napoleon's bed, although Napoleon himself rarely occupied it. The conqueror preferred his camp-bed, which he had placed in his cabinet de toilette. The state bed is very hard in spite of its three mattresses. The barometer by the Chevalier still hangs on the wall, and on a bracket has been placed a bust of Napoleon, which faces the bed in which Nicholas II. reposed. The Prussians in 1870 did considerable damage to the bronzes on the marble mantelpiece, and many of the clocks were carried away by them from the castle. The thirsty Prussians also did not forget to pillage the cellars, but they appear to have left some 30,000 bottles behind, of which French Presidents have liberally availed themselves.

THE life of the family of the King of Denmark at Fredensborg is more like that of an English country house, and a simple one at that. The Royalties call on their neighbours of lesser degree in the friendliest and most unostentatious way, and are all greatly beloved. The old King makes a special point of frequently calling on an old lady, the widow of an officer of high degree, who lives near the castle, and did so a few days ago in company with the Dowager Czarina of Russia. The old lady was out in the castle grounds at the time of the Royal visit, and while there she met the Crown Prince, Queen Alexandra, and the Duchess of Cumberland. The Crown Prince knew her and stopped to introduce her to the Royal ladies; and while they were conversing together the King and Czarina saw the group and joined them. During the conversation a wasp alighted on the old lady's chin and stung her face, but she did not move a muscle although in great pain. The King remarked the incident, and said, "I have never seen so brave a lady;" and she replied in courtly fashion, "I am in the presence of my King."

MUCH has been said about the expected presence of this or that foreign royalty at the Coronation. But another group of men will repeat on that great occasion the memorable experiences of Jubilee year—the Colonial Premiers. All of them are trying to make arrangements to take part in the pageants of June next; and one at least has definitely formed his plans—Sir Wilfrid Laurier. For few men will London keep in store so hearty a welcome as that which awaits the patriotic Premier of the Dominion, who can hardly yet have got out of his ears the roar of a million mouths in 1897.

## Facetiae.

A FLATTERER.—Clara: "What an absurd flatterer Mr. Softie is." Dora: "Did he say you were pretty?" Clara: "He said you were."

A TEST.—Adorer: "You still doubt me? Test my love, Bid me attack wild beasts, defy savages, find the North Pole, descend into a volcano—anything, no matter what, I will do it." Doubting Girl: "Go ask papa."

SHE'D LOOKED.—Mr. Suburb: "I think I'd better go out and see if there are any eggs in the coop." Mrs. S.: "No use; none there. I looked." "Looked in the coop?" "No, I looked in the paper, and it says eggs are two shillings a dozen."

AN UNWELCOME BREEZE: Stokes: "Whew! wasn't it hot last night? I thought a ride in a summer car would give me relief, but I couldn't get a breath of air." SMOKES: "Me, too; but the only time a breeze sprang up was when I struck my last match and tried to light my cigar."

CIRCUMSTANCES ALTER CASES.—Farmer's Wife: "Well, what do you want?" Tramp (with club): "Wot do I want, eh? I want—" Farmer (appearing unexpectedly): "What are you coming round people's houses for with a big club like that?" Tramp (weakly): "I jus' picked this up to chew on, sir, an' I dropped in to see if th' lady wouldn't give me a little salt to flavour it."

FITTED FOR THE POST.—Hotel Proprietor: "Yes, I want a clerk at once. What do you know about hotel-keeping?" Applicant: "Know? See here! Unless you've got four or five years to spare for a little chat, ask me what I don't know. It'll take less time. What do I know about hotel-keeping? Well, I should smile! I know it all—more than all! I could run forty hotels, and play ten games of chess blindfolded. Why, man, I used to be a commercial traveller!"

A BUSY SCRIBE.—First Reporter (big daily paper): "What's the matter?" Second Reporter: "I worked for two mortal hours over that lost child, and spent about five shillings for toys, trying to coax him to tell what his name was, so I could take him to his parents and write it up. Thought I'd get about a column of affecting scenes out of it." "Didn't you succeed?" "Yes, he told, finally." "Then what are you grumbling about?" "He's my own son."

A HORIZONTAL SHAVE.—A famous orator arrived late in a Southern city, where he was engaged to lecture. He needed a shave badly, and had just time for one. Hastening to his room in the hotel he rang for a barber. A bright looking boy came in and announced that he was the barber. The gentleman sat down on a chair and told him to go ahead. "I beg your pardon, sir, but would you mind lying down on the couch?" "Why?" asked the astonished lecturer. "Well, sir, you see, I am generally sent to shave the corpses, and I can shave a man better when he is lying down."

AN ENGLISH JOKE.—She: "I can't make out how it is that Mrs. Wise has fish for nearly every meal. It can't be for economy's sake, for she must be fairly well off." He: "She has a large family of unmarried daughters, you know." She: "Now, don't be nasty, and say something about girls and their brains; that's so old." He: "Oh, no, I hadn't the slightest intention of doing so." She: "Well. Can't you tell me?" He: "I don't know, I'm sure, unless it's because fish are rich in phosphorus." She: "I don't see what that has to do with it." He: "Perhaps not, but still it's good for making matches."

## WITHOUT A REFERENCE.

By the Author of "Diana's Diamonds," "The Gardener's Daughter," &c.

### SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS CHAPTERS.

At the age of two years Sylvia Paske, who is motherless, is taken by her father to the convent of Ramnee Bhim Tai, N. W. Province of India, where she remains for more than 15 years. Mr. Paske takes no interest in his daughter's welfare beyond seeing that the fees are regularly paid and once writing to the Sister Superior to say that if Sylvia is not prepared to take the veil she is to leave the Convent at 18. Sylvia, however, is not disposed to lead the life of a recluse. Conscious of her own powers she longs to take her place in the great world of men and women. The day arrives when she has to say "good-bye" to her dear friends at the convent and goes to stay with a Mr. and Mrs. Cook. This Mrs. Cook has a nephew, Sergeant Hammond, and it is her desire that Sylvia should marry him. Sylvia is indignant at such a proposal, and determines at all costs to leave such a detestable woman, and we now find her at Calcutta on her way to England as the maid of Mrs. Plummer, and who makes quite a confidante of her. At Malia she goes ashore, and, not knowing the evil reputation of some of the streets, finds herself surrounded by a gang of desperadoes, and is only saved by the timely arrival of Roger Hyde. Sylvia discovers that it is a far from easy matter to obtain work in London without a friend, especially when she is robbed of the only paper that could have assisted her—a character from Mrs. Plummer. She finds a companion in a poor girl, and together they manage to exist until one falls ill and their funds are exhausted. Then, as a flower girl, Sylvia meets Roger Hyde once more, and he, in a fit of despair at having to marry within a few days, proposes to this penniless girl.

### CHAPTER XVIII.

**T**HE die was cast! she said to herself, as she fled up towards the neighbourhood of her own home—home such as it was.

She stopped in a corner, and rolled up and concealed the money in a shawl, all but a sovereign. Oh, what a power money is!

She, who had looked through the window of a certain eating-house hours previously, with longing, ravenous eyes, now went inside, and purchased half-a-pound of beef (cold), three fresh eggs, half-a-pound of butter. In a grocer's she bought tea and sugar, and a bottle of port wine; at a baker's a loaf; and at the greengrocer's she ordered a half-a-hundred of coals, and paid for them.

The greengrocer's wife eyed her suspiciously, and rang the money on the counter. Had the girl been picking pockets? She had an odd, excited look. Her eyes shone as if she was in a fever. Followed by a boy carrying part of her purchases she entered Forwood's-rents, and ran upstairs.

Jessie was lying in the dark, very still. Was she asleep? Was she—?

Sara hurriedly lit a candle. No, she was wide awake!

"Good news, Jessie, for a wonder!" throwing off her shawl. "I am going to light a fire, and give you a grand supper."

Jessie coughed and smiled. She knew her friend's sanguine way of talking; but here was a boy with parcels—here was a sack of coals—here was Sara with deft hands already kindling a blaze, and putting on a kettle.

A fresh egg, a bit of buttered toast, and some port wine, were brought to her side. She could hardly credit her senses.

"Where—?" was all she could gulp out.

"I met a friend. He gave me money," said Sara, kneeling at the fire, and not looking round. She need not tell Jessie of her compact as yet. Jessie might object to her selling herself into life-long bondage to a man she would never see. "He has given me money, and you and I will never be cold and hungry again. I have ten pounds!"

"Ten pounds!" almost screamed the other.

"Yes; to-morrow I shall get your mother's wedding-ring out of pawn, Jessie; and, oh! Jessie, if I could only take you away from this place into the country!"

"You never will alive, Sara! But, oh! do bury me somewhere near the fields, and where the birds will sing above me, and the daisies will grow on my grave!"

"Do not talk about such things. You make me miserable! Now I have money—money does wonders—you will have nourishing food and wine, and warmth. You won't know yourself; you will get better!"

A hollow, hacking cough was the only reply to this remark—a cough that was in itself a death-knell. Care and luxuries might do much; but no human power could drag her out of the clutches of death.

That was a marvellous ten pounds that Sara brought home. It did wonders—it went surprisingly far.

In the first place, she redeemed the wedding ring, some clothes and blankets. She paid off the rent. She laid in a supply of tinned soups and port wine, and purchased some flowers in pots to brighten the room, and a new pair of boots for herself; and still she had ten shilling left. Had she been wildly extravagant? Supposing she never saw or heard of Roger Hyde again? Well, with their debts paid, and supplies in, and many things out of pawn, they could still scrape along for some time, and Sanguine Sara fed and clothed, and warming herself at a good fire, had almost as much faith in the future, and in something "turning up" as the celebrated Wilkins Micawber.

Of course, she owed this ten pounds to the young man, and it would have to be paid some day—some day!

She must honestly stick to her part of the bargain, and send him the address of a registry office in her neighbourhood, and did so; but two, three, four days elapsed, and there was no reply. At last, on the fifth day, she received a hasty telegram:—

"Meet me at the Temple Station to-day at twelve o'clock, without fail!"

It was nearly eleven o'clock. She had barely time to dress and set out in order to be in time. She wore a hat remnant of better days—her new boots, and was quite presentable, as a respectable servant girl; but her face was still pale and pinched, her eyes and cheeks sunken; her good looks were under a complete eclipse. To her surprise he was their first, pacing the platform uneasily. He was dressed in mourning with a band of crepe on his hat, and looked as if he had not been in bed for nights.

"I thought you were never coming?" he said, accosting her somewhat hastily.

"I came the moment I got the telegram."

"Moments are money now," he exclaimed.

"My uncle is dead; he went off in a fit of apoplexy, after dinner last Monday, four days ago. He was buried yesterday, and after the funeral the will was read. If I am not married in two days from this he leaves me one shilling. Of course he made this will in a rage, and I believe if he had lived he would have altered it. We had another interview since I saw you. We were both cooler. I told him I was engaged to be married. I had taken him at his word, to a young girl, a lady—a match-seller, whom I had met in the Strand. He caved in completely! He withdrew his ultimatum, and I on my part promised solemnly not to marry a widow—at any rate, not to marry Mrs. Dering. I agreed not to keep my

tryst with you, and I meant to keep you substantially. I knew you had ten pounds to keep you going for the present. The very day after we had made peace my uncle had this seizure at dinner. He never spoke again, poor old chap. I could see he was struggling hard to make himself understood, and I assured him it would be all right, but still he signed with the left hand. He could not use the other, and the excitement brought on another stroke, and he was never conscious again. I now understand what he wanted!"

"And what was that?"

"To revoke the will, but unfortunately, that was out of power. The will is perfectly legal, and stands."

"Yes?"

"I am, as I told you, to provide myself instantly with a wife, or to become a pauper; and the lands and estates and money in the funds—something like nine thousand a year—all go to a very distant connection of mine and he's a hard-headed, hard-up barrister, called Bernard Hyde. Bernard will keep a sharp eye on me. He has never cared for me, nor I for him, and he was naturally envious of my superior luck in being my uncle's heir. As boys together—though he is three years older than I am—we never agreed. He was a sneak, and I used to thrash him. He affects to like me. He gets on in society, and is popular among a certain class; but I know he is a sneak, a double-dyed sneak. Still I don't choose him to walk into my shoes, and I must be married at once."

"When?"

"To-morrow, no later," was his laconic reply.

"To-morrow, and to me?"

"Yes. He asked me plainly if I was married yet, and I said no. I wish you had seen the look in his eye! It did not escape me; though he said, in his most effusive manner, 'My dear fellow, you had better see about it. You have no time to lose, and of course she must be a lady.' And now I am following his advice, as you see. You are a lady, are you not?"

"I know nothing of my parents, but I believe I may honestly say that I am—that is, I have been brought up and educated as one."

"You must have a romantic history?"

"I have."

"And some day you will tell it to me. I have no time to hear it now."

"I do not know that I shall ever tell you," she said, rather affronted at his indifference.

"Oh, yes, you will. Come along, and we will get a hansom, and drive to this office, and make it all square for to-morrow."

"I would rather walk," she rejoined.

"And I wouldn't, we have no time to lose. Come, you must obey me, if only for half a day!"

In two minutes more they were whirling over the pavement at the rate of ten miles an hour.

### CHAPTER XIX.

By twelve o'clock the following morning Roger Hyde and Sylvia Paske were married before the registrar of her parish—a curious and most matter-of-fact couple, thought the registrar's clerk. The man—a gentleman—took a copy of the certificate, and put it carefully in his breast-pocket. The girl, a delicate-looking, shabby young person, possibly a servant, removed the ring which had been placed on her finger, and placed it very coolly in her battered old purse; and there was no kissing, no friends, no demonstration of any sort or kind, as they walked out of the office side by side.

"I have to be at my lawyer's at two o'clock with this," he said, tapping his





"SARA!" EJACULATED HER FRIEND, AS SHE ENTERED. "IS IT SARA?"

pocket. "I have half-an-hour to spare. Come and have something to eat," and he hailed a hansom.

"No, thank you. I am not hungry," she said, shortly.

"Oh, come. We must have our wedding breakfast. I won't keep you more than half-an-hour."

Well, as she would not be likely to see him again she might as well accede to his request, and in a short time they were sitting at a small table in the big dining-room of a big hotel, with a very *recherche* lunch before them—soup, cutlets, game, oysters, and champagne.

"Your very good health, Mrs. Hyde!" he said, pledging her in a brimming glass.

Supposing some of his smart brother officers were to see him sitting *tête-à-tête* with this shabby young person, who was wrapped in a brown shawl, whose hat had seen its best days, and who wore no gloves, how little they would dream that he was partaking of his wedding *déjeuner* with his bride!

She was no beauty, though she had a refined face. Her complexion was muddy and pale, her chin too sharp. However, she had fine eyes.

"I hope you will never regret the step you have taken," she answered, as she touched her glass. "I wish you health and long life to enjoy your fortune."

"Thank you. The same to you, for, of course, you must share my worldly goods."

"Fifty pounds, and five pounds a month, will be sufficient," she answered.

"About sixty pounds a year for a man who has nine thousand! My Uncle Robert gave his cook more than that! A thousand would be little enough, and you can have as much more as you want."

"A thousand! What would a girl living in Forwood's-rents do with a thousand a-year?" in a tone of impatience.

"Get out of it like a shot! You must move to-morrow into some decent place. Where would like to choose? You have all the world before you?"

"I cannot move. I am afraid, with my friend in the last stage of consumption."

"I'll send a doctor and a hospital nurse to see her to-morrow. She can be moved in an ambulance carriage, surely? She would be better where she has some fresh air! Why, Whitechapel air must be poison!"

"And where could we go?" she inquired, gravely.

"I know of a pretty little place near Twickenham, furnished. It is dry and sunny, and has a charming garden. I'll get my man of business to take it to-morrow for Mrs. Hyde," and he laughed. "He will make all your arrangements, and you will have no trouble. I'll tell him to send in a couple of servants and coal, and all that sort of thing."

"But if Jessie can't be moved?"

"Well, if she can't, she can't! But anyway, I'll take the house at Twickenham, and give it as your address. It is preposterous to have Mrs. Hyde living in Whitechapel, and Mr. Hyde in Portland-square. Don't you see it yourself?"

"You are very good, and I thankfully accept all you offer me, for Jessie's sake." (This was a mere figure of speech, thought the young man. She is no fool, and a thousand a-year and a nice house at Twickenham is not to be poked up every day in the week.)

"When she is gone it will be different," she added.

"I'll send in the doctor and sister to-

night," he said. "And hadn't you better get yourself a new rig out, eh?" looking critically at her shawl and hat. "I fancy that is the first thing to be done. I will drop you at Peter Robinsons, or one of the big shops, and you can get some sort of a bonnet and jacket and gloves. Here," offering her a roll of notes, "spend these!"

"What, all on myself?"

"Yes, on yourself," with a quick motion of his hand. "Not on housekeeping, and let me see that you make yourself smart. Remember you have a moral as well as a legal right to this money. Only for you I should be in Queer-street. Time is up at twelve to-morrow!"

"But you have plenty to do with your money," tendering back the notes. "You are very liberal. As it is, I am quite rich to what I have been."

"Can't you see," impatiently, "that you cannot go about as you are in those old clothes? I thought every woman liked to be well dressed. Have you any affection for that old hat and shawl?"

"No, none," colouring.

"And if I did not give you this roll of notes, the chances are I should spend it on some rubbish, or lose it over a couple rubbers of 'whist' or at pyramid pool, and it would do no good to anyone; whereas, if you lay it out cleverly, it will give me great pleasure, and remember, it is all to be spent on yourself. I undertake your move, and debts, and all expenses."

"Are you going to stay on in Portland-square?"

"No, I am going out to Malta next week. I am not going to chuck the service just yet. I'll hang on for a few months—anyway, till I get my company, and I don't care about being in town just now. Bernard will be

is still pronounced by its readers to be the best of Story Papers.

quietly dogging me, like a sleuth-hound on the track, to discover who I have married, and all about her. He will, no doubt, make his way down to you at Twickenham, sooner or later, and mind you slow him a bold front!"

"Although you yourself are going to run away," with a bitter little smile?

"How sharp you are, Mrs. Hyde? You are giving me an early taste of married discipline."

"I do not intend it as such, for I am but a dummy wife. I merely stated a fact."

"And, talking of running away, I must be going. I have heaps to do. I'll take you as far as Regent-street, and leave you wherever you please."

"Thank you; but you need not. I know my way."

"And I mean to have my way. You are always protesting against walking with me, and that's absurd. Besides, I do not choose you to walk about these muddy streets alone."

"Am I so very attractive looking?" she asked, as she rose, and brushed the crumbs from her dress.

"No matter what you are, you have to do as you are told," he answered, with an air of cool decision.

This was not in the bond, she mentally remarked.

What a masterful young man he was! She watched as she waited whilst she paid the waiter. A good-looking young man, and her husband—her make-believe husband! How strange it seemed; and yet, make-believe or not, they could, neither of them ever call another man or woman husband or wife until death had severed this business-like bond.

As she waited, another soldierly-looking man entered the dining-room, and catching a glimpse of a comrade, said,—

"Hullo, Roger! What brings you here? Heard all about you, my dear boy—congratulate you—congratulate you. Come along and have a bottle of fizz with me, and let us drink to your enjoyment of this fine fortune."

"Thanks, awfully, old man, but I can't stop now. Dine with me to-morrow at the Junior, eight sharp, and do a theatre!"

"All right; but what's your hurry, eh? Money brings its cares. You have lawyers and business now. A poor devil like me can call his time his own. Well, by-bye."

"And so that was his hurry," he exclaimed, as he noticed Roger join a shabby-looking young person, and escort her to a hansom. "Pshaw! Some scrape of Master Roger's. I wouldn't have thought it of him. I'll chaff him well when I see him to-morrow night."

Sara alighted in Regent-street, Roger's parting words being, "mind you don't spare the money," and went into a large establishment, where she could fit herself out from head to foot.

She made her way first to the mantle and dress department, and asked to see some ready-made dresses. She chose a very neat black serge, which could be made to fit her in an hour's time; and during that time she purchased a bonnet, a smart winter jacket, a boa, gloves, umbrella, collars and cuffs, handkerchiefs, stockings, and a box in which to carry away her old clothes.

In two hours' time she walked out into Regent-street, quite transformed. What dress can do! She was a tall, quietly but handsomely dressed, rather delicate-looking young lady!

The commissionaire in the doorway moved aside respectfully to allow her to pass to a cab, in which she and her purchases were driven back to Forwood's-rents.

The cabman was amazed that such a distinguished looking fare could give him such

an address; but maybe she was one of the ladies who had the craze for what they called "slumming."

However, she paid him what he asked, more than most did, and was evidently going to stay. A dirty little boy called out,—

"Oh, my wig! Look at the front garret! Ain't she a swell! She's been picking some one's pocket!"

However, for twopence he was perfectly ready to carry her box upstairs, and leave it on the top landing.

"Sara!" ejaculated her friend, as she entered. "Is it Sara?" as she surveyed the young lady, whose hat, dress, jacket, and boa represented twenty pounds—who wore French boots and French gloves, and carried a slim, silver topped umbrella in her hand.

"Yes, and these are my new clothes. Here in this parcel is a warm dressing-gown for you, and when you have had a cup of tea I have a great deal to tell you. In the first place how do you feel?"

"Better. I have slept for three hours."

"Do you think you could bear to be moved out of this to-morrow?" kneeling down beside her, and taking her hand.

"I moved!" in a tone of intense amazement.

"Yes, carried of course, and placed lying down in an invalid's carriage, and made very comfortable?"

Sara shook her head.

"What, not to see the country? I grant you it is November; but even so, to a pretty house, warm and sunny, and a pretty view and garden."

"Oh, Sara! you must be making this up! you are romancing."

"No. A doctor will come and see you this evening, and also a nurse; and if you think you are equal to it you are to be moved from here to Twickenham to-morrow; but it all depends on you!" and she threw out both hands with an expressive movement.

"On me!" with a flush in her cheek. "Then, Sara, I'll do it if I die on the way. To see the fields and trees and birds once more I would do anything, and even if I die on the way you will bury me in the country."

"Come, you are not as bad as that. If I raise you, can you sit up a little in bed, in your new dressing-gown? You must make a beginning, you know."

"Yes, yes," quite carelessly, "help me to get up."

"Well, first I must tidy the room, and get you some tea; and then we shall see what you are able to do."

The will has great power over the poor frail body. Jessie not only sat up, but had herself lifted into a chair by the fire; and here, propped by pillows, with eager, half incredulous eyes and panting breath, she listened to her friend's adventure in the Strand, her interview at the Temple Station, the particulars of her bargain with Roger Hyde, the particulars of her marriage that morning.

"Dear heart alive! good gracious me!" was all she could feebly ejaculate from time to time.

Now that the step was taken beyond recall, Sara frankly told her friend everything, and of course she would have to be let into the secret of Mrs. Hyde.

"I know you did it for me, Sara," said Jessie pressing her hand in an excited fashion.

"And myself too."

"No; if I had been a burden you would never have elinched such a bargain—you know it."

"A thousand a year is not a bad exchange for a name—a mere empty name," with a touch of mockery in her tone.

"You said he was an old friend. Oh, Sara!"

"And so he was. He was the officer who came to my rescue in Malta. You have heard all about that, and how I lost myself there, and had a narrow escape of my life."

"And he is the very man? How romantic! Does he know?"

"No; he has not the faintest idea. If it had been another man I don't think I could have done it."

"What! Are you in love with him?"

"No, no, no. I only saw him once," flushing.

"Sometimes that is sufficient," argued Jessie.

"Yes, to some; but I am not susceptible. I am grateful."

"Shall you ever tell him?" inquired Jessie, with all a woman's curiosity.

"I don't think so, but I cannot say."

"And does he not know what has brought you to London?"

"No. He has been so occupied with his own affairs that he has not had time to think of mine. I told him I believed I was a lady by birth, and I am married in my own name—Paskie. He said he had heard the name of Sylvia Paskie before."

"And he may help you. He may know them."

"Yes, but he is going abroad next week, back to his regiment."

"Oh! And what is he like?"

"He is young. About five-and-twenty, slight, and straight, and impetuous in his ways, and masterful. He has dark blue eyes, chestnut hair, and a large, reddish moustache; he has a very finely chiselled nose and chin, and is altogether decidedly good looking."

"Ah!" looking at her companion with keen scrutiny. "And this is your wedding day. Believe me, you will keep your silver wedding in a different fashion."

"I do not see how I can," with wonderful unconcern. "Mr. Hyde is nothing to me, and I am nothing to him—no more than if we were two witnesses to a deed. Probably after next week I shall never set eyes on him again."

"Never!" repeated Jessie. "Oh, come!"

"Never, and, anyway, his presence or his absence is alike indifferent to me," and she got up quickly and began to put away the tea things, and then proceeded to arrange the invalid's bed.

"You will be able to move, Jessie. Don't you think so?" she asked, as she tenderly helped her into it.

"Yes, I am sure I shall;" and then, in a changed tone, and one full of misery, "I would make any effort and suffer almost anything in order to die in the country."

## CHAPTER XX.

ALTHOUGH the flesh was weak the spirit overmastered it; and Jessie, with the doctor's sanction, was moved from "Forwood's Rents" the very next day. A nursing Sister from the London Hospital accompanied her to Twickenham—a bright, cheery woman, in a blue gown and white apron, and deep snowy collar and cuffs, the uniform of her profession. She was to remain as Jessie's attendant until—well, the period was not filled up in words, but everyone knew that her services would not be required for long.

Whilst nurse and patient made their way slowly across the city Sara proceeded them with the van and her friend's very scanty worldly goods. Packing had been a short affair. One small box and the canary and cage comprised them all. Sara drove up about two o'clock to the Lindens, Twickenham—an old red brick house, with its back



to the road, looking into a bright garden, shaded with some trees.

It was not large, but it seemed quite a mansion to the new tenant, as she alighted and timidly rang the bell. The door was promptly opened by a very smart maid, who stared with great surprise at her new mistress, arriving just like a servant, in a four-wheeler, with one box and a bird cage.

"I am Mrs. Hyde," said Sara, simply. "I suppose you are the parlour-maid."

"Yes, ma'am."

"Then please get my things taken in."

She walked into the house—her house! her own house. How extraordinary it seemed! There was a stone hall—a wide, shallow staircase, three sitting-rooms and a bedroom—the latter the very thing for Jessie, all comfortable and quaintly furnished. Upstairs more bedrooms, with queer dressing-tables, fourposters draped in ancient chintz, and valuable Chippendale furniture—an old-fashioned house, smelling of dried rose leaves and lavender, warm, comfortable, and snug. The garden was charming, and matched the house; long, straight gravel walks, borders of flowers, arches, arbours, rockeries. The most had been made of it, and it had been laid out according to the taste of a past generation.

Sara descended to the kitchens, and found that they were as satisfactory as upstairs. The lower regions had hitherto been her own sphere since she had left Shirani; and this was her very first experience of a well-furnished establishment of the upper middle classes. She would like to have asked the names of many curious things, but was wise enough to possess her soul in silence.

The cook, Mrs. Becker—a dark-eyed, stout, good-looking woman—was a great talker. She had taken the liberty of bringing her cat—a black cat. The agents who engaged her said "they thought there would be no objection, and a black cat in a house was so lucky!" she added, volubly.

"No objection," said Mrs. Hyde, "as long as you keep him below. We have a canary."

"Oh! Then you may depend on me; he shall never as much as see it. And the sick lady that is coming. What am I to prepare?"

"Beef-tea, and an egg and wine beaten up, please. Have you everything you want down here?"

"Yes, ma'am, I think so; but I'll let you know to-morrow."

What cook ever had all she wanted?

The arrangements were wonderfully complete; table linen, cooking utensils, glass, cutlery, and plate, all seemed to be amply provided.

The house had been "let furnished." Mr. Hyde had given the men of business *carte blanche*; and, where money is no object, money can do wonders.

Jessie's room had just been prepared and aired, a fire lit, and flowers placed on the table when there was a ring at the door. "Too soon for Jessie and the nurse," thought Sara. A man's step and a man's smart parlour-maid came, and said, with a snimper,—

"If you please, ma'am, Mr. Hyde."

Mr. Hyde scarcely recognised the well-dressed young lady that presently walked in the drawing-room. "She was a lady, and no mistake about it," he said to himself, as he shook hands.

"Well, what do you think of this little place?" he asked. "It's not bad, is it?"

"It is charming. I can scarcely believe that I am to stay here. I have never been in such a nice house in my life!"

"Oh, you will soon get used to it. Sharp and Short are capital fellows. They put their finger on their house at once. It belonged to an old lady who died lately, and they managed to hire everything, glass, crockery, lamps, and linen, just as it stands, and got me two respectable servants, well recommended, they said. Will they suit?"

"Yes, I should think so; they seem all you say."

"All servants are prone to talk. I am sure my man discusses what I believe are my most private matters with all the valets in the neighbourhood of Jermyn-street. You must be on your guard with these women. They will want to find out who you are, and all about you. Ah! I see, you have not got your wedding-ring on. That will never do!" glancing at her small, but rough red hand—rough and red from hard, manual labour—washing, scrubbing, cooking, and lighting fires, by no means the hand of a born lady.

"No, I suppose I must wear it."

"Suppose! Why!" of course, he rejoined, emphatically. "You had better buy more clothes, and bring a good stock of boxes; and, whatever you do, do not let them know where you came from, or they would fly out of the house. Make the nurse hold her tongue."

"But why all these precautions?"

"On account of Bernard—my disappointed cousin, Bernard. He will come here. He will ask questions. He will do all he can to find a flaw in my armour, my case, my rights. If he only could discover that I have not kept the terms of the will in one single item, that you were not younger than myself, not unmarried previously, and not a lady by birth, I forfeit every half-penny to him, and a pretty halfpenny it is. It is worth a struggle on his part, worth a scheme. I have a queer presentiment that he will out me yet."

"How can he?"

"I am sure I am not able to answer for him. He will leave no stone unturned! He will be extremely anxious to know who your people are, and what claim you have to gentle birth. Who is your father?"

"Mr. Paske. He lives in Eaton Place."

"I think I knew him. A square-built man, with black eyes, lots of money. And how came you, his daughter, to be selling matches in the Strand?"

"It is such a long story, and will take a good while to tell."

"Never mind how long. I would like to hear it. I'll poke up the fire, and may I light a cigarette, and had you not better order up tea? You have had nothing since you arrived, have you?"

"No; but I can wait. Smoke, of course, if you please. I'll tell you my whole history. Here is Jessie and the nurse! I must put it off till another day," rising and hurrying into the hall to welcome the invalid; and in the fuss incident on her arrival he effected his departure, and Sara's story remained untold for a long time.

If she had not been interrupted, if she had even had ten minutes' grace that winter afternoon, what a difference it would have made in her future and his! He returned two days later, and said, as he accosted Sara,—

"I am off to-morrow morning. Not another hour's leave to be had for love or money. As it is I shall have a narrow squeak of being reported absent. I go by France, Italy, and get a steamer from Palermo. My men of business—Sharp and Short—have instructions about you. The rent and taxes are paid, and they allow you one thousand a year. Keep Bernard at arm's length, that's all I beg of you. You may meet him, and think him a charming,

gentlemanly, dapper little fellow. He is a scheming, mean little sneak. I don't suppose we shall meet again for a long time, you and I. If you want anything mind you write and let me know. Privateers, Valetta, will find me. I hope you will make yourself comfortable, and have a good time; but, at present, you had better keep rather quiet, and not make any acquaintances."

"No!" with a queer smile.

"After a while, when time has worn down the edge of Bernard's curiosity, you might. And, of course, you are not bound to stay here. You may prefer to live elsewhere. I have no control over you."

"No; but if I did anything you disapproved of I suppose you would stop my income?"

"I could not if I would. It is settled on you for life, and we can each go our own way, you see."

"You have been very liberal—too liberal!"

"Now I must be off. I have no time to lose. Mind, if you want anything, write!"

By this time they were already standing up, and the parlourmaid entered, and said,—

"Please, sir, the cabman says if you are going back by the next train you have not a minute to lose. You will barely catch it as it is."

"By Jove, then I'm off! Good-bye!" wringing Sara's hand heartily, and seizing his hat.

"Good-bye!" she echoed.

They looked at one another for about the space of two seconds in dead silence, and then he hurried into the hall, ran down the steps, and along a side path to the gate, which was at the back of the house. Another moment, and they heard the rattling away of a hansom at great speed, and he was gone.

"He just shook hands with her, as he would with you or me, cook!" said the parlourmaid, "and as if he were going for a walk—not a sign of sorrow on either of them. And from what I can make out he is to be away a long time, and is going to foreign parts. I think it looks fishy!"

"Is it only now you are finding that out?" said Mrs. Becker, her fellow-servant. "I have thought so from the first!"

"Why?"

"Well, for one thing. When I took in a parcel of medicine and a bill addressed Mrs. Hyde, she looked as if she did not know who Mrs. Hyde was—not used to the name, and got very red in the face when I said, 'Is it for you, ma'am?'"

"I expect she is not long married."

"I expect she is not married at all. Why didn't she wear a wedding-ring?" demanded the cook.

"Yes, I never noticed that till yesterday. I am not as sharp as you are, Mrs. Becker."

"And have you looked at her hands? Rough and red just like my own—hands that have done plenty of hard work—not the hands of a lady; and she seems to have next to no clothes, and only one dress and one box."

"Yes, but in spite of her hands she looks like a lady, cook. You must allow that she is handsome, too, if she wasn't so skinny and thin."

"Handsome!" with a sniff. "Handsome is as handsome does. There's a screw loose somewhere, believe me."

"And shall you give notice?" rather anxiously.

"Not just yet. It's a light place. There's no stint in anything—coals, gas, butcher's meat, good wages, beer and washing money, and 'Boots' (her cat) likes the kitchen, and he has a fine sunny window to sit in. No

"I'm not fond of money, and I expect, any way, I'll put in the winter here."

"It's more than the sick girl will do. She is not long for this place, or any place but the churchyard. I never saw anyone so weak to be alive."

"Yes, that's plain. But care and nourishment and good nursing may carry her on till the spring. These bad cases hang on very long sometimes."

November faded into December, and December into January, and still Jessie Cave clung to life. Her friend nursed her with a care that was almost fierce in its tenderness. She seemed as if she personally fought with Death inch by inch the ground over which he was hurrying her only friend to the churchyard.

Incessant attention, warm rooms, wine, nourishment of all kinds were lavished on her invalid, who became quite sanguine as to her own partial recovery—the flickering up of life into a bright blaze before it goes out into death and darkness.

"And so you have never written once to Malta, Sara?" she asked one day, rather suddenly.

"No. He has not written to me, and he said I was to write if I wanted anything. There is nothing I want."

"Perhaps a little society?"

"Well, he could not give me that, or make people call on me. The only people who have crossed the threshold have been the doctor and the parson, but I don't want any visitors. I am very well as I am. I have you."

"You look very well, at any rate. Good food and good clothes have worked wonders. You have a colour, and your cheeks have filled out. One scarcely knows you."

"Yes, this quiet life suits me. Grubbing in the garden, taking long walks, reading new books, eating, sleeping—and—"

"Nursing me," interrupted Jessie.

"That is not much. Sister Susan takes more than her share."

"What an expense and trouble I am!" cried Jessie, impatiently.

"Don't. If you begin to talk like that I shall be very, very angry. What a loud peal at the bell. I wonder it is not broken. Perhaps a visitor at last. I sincerely hope not. I am not yet half used to my new role, nor able to conduct myself as a staid, married woman. If I was cross-examined as to who I was, and where I came from, and when I expected my husband, and where I was married, and if I had had a pretty wedding, and were any of my own relations coming to stay with me and keep me company, I should break down at once."

"You can always talk of the weather and the garden," said Jessie, "and of Dick the canary, and the cook's cat."

"I don't think they would find that sufficiently interesting. People like more exciting topics nowadays; at least, as far as I can glean from books."

At this instant the door opened, and the parlour-maid came in with a salver in her hand, and on that salver a card, and said,—

"A gentleman in the drawing-room to see Mrs. Hyde."

Sara's heart jumped into her mouth when she snatched up the card and saw printed on it,—

"MR. BERNARD HYDE,

"Inner Temple."

So it had come at last! Now for the tug of war, and at the thought of what was coming she drew in her breath hard.

## CHAPTER XXI.

BEFORE going out to receive her visitor Sara walked over to the glass, and looked

at herself critically. Her dress was tailor-made, neat and becoming. Her hair was quite tidy, but her face was pale, and her lips pressed together, with a look of resolution that surprised herself.

Was this how she appeared when she had a battle to wage, a crisis to tide over, and would she tide over this one? She would require all her nerve, and all her woman's wit. He was sure to cross-examine her as if she were a witness at Old Bailey.

"So that is Bernard Hyde come to call," said Jessie, turning over the card with her long, skeleton-like fingers. "Are you not afraid of him? You can't talk to him of the weather, and the garden, and the canary, can you?"

"We will see," said Sara, turning and looking at her hollow-eyed friend, and resolving that, no matter what he said or did, he should not oust her from this comfortable nest as long as Jessie needed a home.

She went to the drawing-room door, turned the handle after a second's hesitation, and walked in and bowed to a little fair man, who was standing with his back to the fire.

He stared in unaffected astonishment at the tall, handsome young lady before him. Was this the wife his cousin had picked out of the street at a moment's notice, in order to secure old Robert Hyde's legacy, and to defraud him? Impossible!

"I am I speaking to Mrs. Hyde? Have I the pleasure of seeing Mrs. Roger Hyde?" he asked.

She bowed, and said,—

"Pray sit down. Roger told me that I might expect a call from you."

This was either a lie on her part, or a bold prophecy on Roger's side, for he had taken care to conceal his wife's whereabouts from his kinsman, and had given strict orders to his people of business that they were not to furnish her address to anyone on any pretext; and he had, then, got it with much difficulty, and after weeks of delay, in an underhand fashion.

"My cousin Roger did not give me your address, nor leave me any means of discovering it," he said, with a short laugh. "He must think me very clever, and have a great opinion of my abilities."

"I believe he has," she replied, quietly. "You see, he was a true prophet."

"Yes, and I am very pleased indeed to have found your address, and to have the pleasure of paying my respects in person to my cousin's wife."

"You are very good, I am sure," she returned, quietly.

"We were boys at school together."

(To be continued next week.)

(This story commenced in No. 2000. Back Nos. can be obtained through any newsagent.)

## THE TIDE OF TIME.

Floating down the mighty river,  
To the far-off shadowed shore;  
Watching we the sunbeams quiver,  
While we rest the wearied car.  
Some a watchful lookout keeping,  
Pass the golden gate sublime;  
Some are wrecked and now lie sleeping,  
Buried 'neath the tide of time.

But the waters give no token  
Of their calm and peaceful graves;  
Flowing on, and only broken  
By the cruel mocking waves.  
Many hearts grow sad and dreary,  
Still the babbling waters chime;  
Loves are lost, the strong grow weary,  
Floating down the tide of time.

## Woman Against Woman.

By Effie Adelaide Rowlands,

Author of "Flower of Fate," "Unseen Fires," &c., &c.

### SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS CHAPTERS.

Lord Greville and a party of friends are yatching and have put into Ostend for a few hours. His brother, Lord Dunstan, has strayed away from the rest of the party, and Lord Greville feeling anxious has gone in search of him. While strolling round a less frequented part of the town he is stopped by a woman who asks assistance, which is readily given. On returning to his friends he finds that they have accidentally met Mrs. Archdale and her daughter, and it is at the earnest request of Lord Dunstan that they decide to remain another night at Ostend. Iona Archdale meets with an accident while on board the *Perle*, and which detains her for several days. Arriving in England Greville finds that Mrs. Archdale and her daughters have arranged to stay very close to his own Yorkshire seat. Mrs. Archdale plays her cards so adroitly that in the end Greville proposes to Iona, despite the protest of his friend Dick Fraser. Matters are now becoming interesting for Dick Fraser has met Mary, the lady Lord Greville befriended, and who is now on the high road to become a popular singer.

### CHAPTER XII.

ESTHER, I want you to read this note!"

"One moment, my sweet! I must wash my brushes."

"You never will let me help you!" Mary said, with reproachful tenderness.

Esther kissed the sweet lips and silenced them.

"Your little hands are not meant for such work. Go and look at the picture instead, and tell me what you think of it! You can get a faint idea of the likeness now. At least, I hope so."

Mary stood before the easel, and gazed at the canvas quietly.

"She is very beautiful, Esther!" she said, not moving her eyes from Iona's smiling vivid face.

"Is she?" Esther asked, from the other side of the studio, where she was busy cleaning her brushes. "It depends on what you call beauty. Lady Greville certainly has many good points, and her colouring is decidedly remarkable, but—"

"Oh! there is no but, Esther."

Esther came brusquely across the room.

"I will show you the sort of 'but' I mean," she said, and with that, she wheeled Mary round and made her face a mirror. "Just look at that image and at that. One is the embodiment of soul, of purity of heart, the other—"

"You know," Mary said, with a blush, "I shall absolutely refuse to come into your studio at all if you will be so—so silly!"

"Words of wisdom, my dear!" cried Esther, seating herself in her favourite crouched-up attitude on the edge of the platform. "But if you don't like to hear them you shall not!"

"You find her pleasant," Mary said, sitting in one of the big chairs scattered about the room.

Esther pinched up her lips.

"I feel inclined every now and then to launch my palate at her head. She is the coolest, most disagreeable and the most insolent young woman I have ever come in contact with, in every sense—not a lady."

"Esther, surely not!" Mary said, hurriedly.

In a vague sort of indefinite way this pained her. All women are sentimentalists, and Mary had, somehow, grown to weave dreams and ideas about the man who had helped her so generously, promptly and delicately, on that one occasion. She had thought very often of the newly-wed hus-



band and wife, and fell into sketching their happiness. She had imagined Iona a lovely English girl, with innocent dewy eyes and childish lips—a sort of flower wife to the tall, handsome young Saxon nobleman.

Dimly she received a shock as she had gazed at Iona's portrait. This brilliant woman with her curious mocking smile her vivid beauty, her extraordinary eyes, was the very antithesis of her dream—a being who did not possess one of the qualifications with which Mary had endowed her mental heroine.

"Well," Esther said, screwing herself into another impossible attitude, "perhaps I ought to modify that statement, and say that I do not think Lady Greville Earne to be what old-fashioned folk used to call a gentlewoman. Her birth, no doubt, is irreproachable. I forget who she was, but one of the great ones of the earth, I suppose. But notwithstanding this, Mary, my sweet, she is far from gentle. I don't think I ever met with so much that expressed evil in any face I have drawn! Look at that mouth and chin—power and cruelty. Look at the nostrils, cruelty—again. The eyes are magnificent in colour, with no more real depth than this board. I don't like this beautiful Lady Greville, my Mary, and that is the truth; but *parlons d'autres choses*. You have a letter. You want my advice!"

"It is from Lady Mostyn!" Mary said, handing the note across, and smiling, half sadly and half timidly. "She wishes to know if I will sing for her on Sunday night. She expects Royalty, you see, and— naming a great violinist, 'is to play.'"

"From your aunt!" Esther said, reading through the letter. What shall you do, Mary?"

"Accept the engagement," Mary answered, quietly. "I am free on Sunday night you know. I shall inform Lady Mostyn my terms are twenty guineas, that I never sing under that. I shall get the money," she added, with something like a sneer. "Aunt Helena will always pay for the excitement of the moment."

"Do you think you are equal to this?" Esther asked, in her most matter-of-fact tone, but she was looking anxiously at Mary meanwhile.

"Quite!" Mary said, gently. "My dear, we must meet sooner or later; and, thanks to you and to Miss Martingale, the nervousness that used to oppress me so terribly is gradually going. I think I am almost strong enough to meet—"

She paused, but Esther knew she meant Paul Cosanza by that pause.

"The notion pleases me!" she said, with her pleasant laugh, as she clasped her arms round her knees and rocked herself to and fro. "I think it is so lovely to get twenty guineas out of Lady Mostyn. Why not ask forty, Mary?"

Whatever answer Mary might have made was not spoken, for at that moment there came a sharp rap at the door of the studio.

"Come in!" cried Esther, still cuddling herself up—a comical object, in her long blue painting blouse. "Make it forty—darling!" she continued, "or fifty—or— Come in! I wonder who on earth it is? Not Tim, I am sure. She never waits to knock, but bursts in upon me like a whirlwind. Oh!"

This last exclamation broke suddenly from Esther as she unlocked her arms from her knees and sprang to her feet. The door had opened, and had admitted—not Tim, her slave of the studio—a real genuine type of the cockney girl—but a gentleman, tall, handsome, fair, with a hat in his hand, and a smile on his lips.

"I beg your pardon!" he said, quickly. "I must apologise for this intrusion. I have come to see if my wife left a bracelet here

by chance this afternoon. Have I the pleasure of addressing Miss Gall? My name is Greville Earne!"

Mary had risen, and was standing at the farther end of the studio diligently examining a study in drapery that she had seen a score of times before.

She had felt the colour rush to her face, and her heart beat, as the first sounds of that voice fell on her ear.

How it recalled that summer night and all her misery! She knew him at once, before he spoke his name.

Esther welcomed Lord Greville with her abrupt, yet pleasant way.

"Please, come in! I am so sorry! I had no idea it was a visitor. I thought it was my little creature who comes to look after my things. Will you sit down here, Lord Greville? What is it like? I don't remember it!"

Greville described the bangle, "Is it permitted to look at the portrait, Miss Gall?" he asked.

Esther paused.

"I think I would rather you did not just yet, Lord Greville. You may be disappointed!"

"That would be impossible," Greville said, with a courteous little bow, "seeing," he added quietly and with no pretence to flattery, "that Miss Gall's work is already known to me."

Esther coloured, and Mary, still in the back ground, felt a thrill of pleasure. Yes, she had, indeed, judged him rightly. Kindness was the backbone of his nature.

"My friend, old Lady Dorchester, has one of your pictures, Miss Gall," Greville continued, as he helped in the search for the missing bangle. "It is lovely! Called, I fancy, 'A Woman's Face.' I have often won-

dered if that face was ideal or real. Was it a portrait?"

Mary moved round suddenly. She was afraid of what Esther was going to say.

"May I help you, Esther?" she asked, hurriedly.

Greville looked up at her. The afternoon light was fading in the studio, but it was clear enough to show him the loveliness of the woman who stood before him. As long as he lived he would never forget that moment.

Mary had on a dress of grey, shimmering velvet or plush, made in long, straight folds that seemed to cling and hang tenderly about her graceful young form. The neck was out a little low, and above the soft cream lace that trimmed it, one saw the beautiful throat.

It was a dream face, Greville said, almost involuntarily to himself, that fair, oval countenance with the exquisite features, and those marvellous blue eyes, shining dark as the midnight sky below the pretty brows, from which the hair was brushed softly away, Madonna fashion.

Greville had never in his life met so fair, so true, so beautiful an embodiment of young womanhood.

Esther turned round hurriedly.

"Ah! Mary," she said; then quickly, "Mrs. Arbuthnot, will you allow me to present Lord Greville Earne?"

Mary acknowledged the introduction with a little bow, but did not extend her hand.

"If the bangle is here it should not be far to find," she said, bending over the platform and beginning to search.

"I beg! I pray!" Greville said, hurriedly, "I cannot permit you ladies to

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trouble yourselves in this way! I am sure my wife has made a mistake!"

"The studio shall be thoroughly searched this evening," Esther said, promptly; "and then, if it is here, it must be found!"

Greville took up his hat, but he seemed to hesitate.

"I suppose, Mrs. Arbuthnot," he said, hurriedly, almost shyly, "that you are already tired of hearing how much pleasure you—you give to others, or—"

Mary's face coloured.

"Have you heard me sing?" she asked, just looking at him for a moment.

"Last Monday night, at Lady Caledonia's reception, I heard you," Greville answered, "but I did not see you! If I had," he thought rapidly to himself, "I should have comprehended what it was that made everybody so full of admiration."

Mary smiled faintly.

"I am glad you were pleased! I like to give pleasure, Lord Greville!" she said, simply.

"Pleased is scarcely the word, Mrs. Arbuthnot, I was so entranced! For a time you made me forget everything!"

"It is a way Mary has!" Esther laughed, gaily.

Mary! What a lovely name, he thought, and how well it suited her!

"And yet in my great enjoyment there was one regret, Mrs. Arbuthnot," he said, after a little pause.

Mary looked her inquiry.

"I was wishing all the time that my mother could have heard you!" he said, answering that look, and wondering vaguely whether he had ever seen such magnificent, such soulful eyes before, and, if so, when and where? "She is an invalid, and never leaves Barrackbourne Castle. Music is a passion with her, and your voice would give her the keenest delight, I am sure, for I know well the singing she loves best!"

Mary paused a second. There was an exquisite tinge of colour in her face, as she answered,—

"I shall esteem it an honour and a pleasure to be allowed to sing for Lady Barrackbourne, whenever she cares to hear me!"

"You would go to Barrackbourne?" Greville cried, a feeling of intense gratitude, mingled with some other emotions not quite so definable, rushing into his mind. "How can I thank you, Mrs. Arbuthnot?"

A loud knock at the door stopped further conversation.

"May I come in?" asked Dick Fraser's voice, and before anyone answered, he had followed his voice.

"I have a box for the Lyceum," he began, and then he came to a sudden stop, as his eyes fell on the tall, handsome figure talking so earnestly to Mary.

There was a pause of scarcely a second, and then they had both made a step forward, and were clasping hands.

"Why, Greville, old fellow!"

"Dear old Dick!"

That was all. The Englishman's welcome after years of absence—the outward expression that hides so much feeling.

Greville and Dick were English to the core. They needed no more than those two or three words to signify how deeply they both felt this meeting after their first and only quarrel.

"So glad you know one another!" Esther said, in her own peculiar fashion. "There is nothing I hate so much as introducing!"

Mary felt a sort of dimness come over her eyes. Possessed of that extraordinary, almost illimitable, sympathy which is given to some women, she understood the situation at once, and Dick's quietness and de-

pression at Christmas time was now thoroughly explained to her.

"I am so glad!" she said to herself, while Dick was asking a few earnest questions about his aunt and all at Barrackbourne.

"We go down there for Easter," Greville said. "My mother's birthday falls in Easter week, and we are going to have grand doings. Will you come, Dick?"

"Willingly, old fellow!" was the ready reply.

Greville smiled into his cousin's face, and then he took up his hat again.

"This time I must go. I have already trespassed too much on your kindness, Miss Gall."

"Come whenever you like, Lord Greville. I shall be delighted to see you!" Esther said, with a total disregard of all conventionality. "This is Bohemia, you know. You must forgive all shortcomings. We shall be very glad to see Lord Greville, shan't we, Mary dear?"

"A cousin and a friend of Mr. Fraser's must always be welcome!" Mary answered, gently, as she gave him her hand.

Dick Fraser's face coloured suddenly, and Greville caught the look that came into his eye.

"We shall meet soon!" he said, as he said *au revoir* to his cousin.

"To-morrow," Dick answered, promptly, "I shall call on your wife, and shall look you up at the club afterwards."

Greville went away slowly.

"Dick has lost his heart to her, and no wonder. What a lovely face! Where have I seen it before? I seem to remember the eyes, though not the face. To forget that would be impossible!" He hailed a cab, and was driven homewards. "I suppose it is only some fleeting memory. Is it that picture of Lady Dorchester's? Of course, it must be. Miss Gall painted it. They are friends, and yet—they seemed to be living eyes I remember. Where was it?"

Think as he might, the past would not clear, and he paid his cab and entered his house without arriving at a conclusion. "Dick is a lucky chap. Such a woman and such a voice! Dear old fellow, I'm glad we made it up. The truest and best pal in the world. I should care for him if only because he loves my dear mother so devotedly. I hope he and Ione will get on. I am afraid she knows he rather objected at first; and it may have prejudiced her against him; but she is such a child she will soon forget!" he smiled to himself as he went to his room. He was still deeply fascinated by his beautiful young wife.

"I should like to see those two faces together," he thought, as he put himself into his man's hands to be dressed for dinner.

"What a contrast, both so beautiful and so different. One the face of a laughing, vivid, sparkling child, the other a delicate, sorrowful, exquisite Madonna-like woman. She must have suffered," Greville thought on, as he settled his diamond studs and tied his tie. "But then she is a widow, so young. What story of love and sorrow is hers, I wonder; her eyes seem to speak volumes. Those eyes again! How they haunt me, and I can't give them a place in my memory!"

To Greville's delight and Dick's surprise Ione received him most graciously. She remembered her mother's advice,—

"Be friends with everyone of your husband's people. You never know when you may want them!"

And since the announcement of Mrs. Archdale's most extraordinary forthcoming marriage Ione gave her mother's wisdom and worldly knowledge the deepest and

most sincere respect. A woman who could do what she had done must, indeed, be worthy of respect and imitation.

So, bearing in mind this saying about relations, Ione cordially extended the hand of welcome and friendship to Dick, whom she secretly hated and feared.

She might call Greville a fool if she chose, though he was far from that indeed; but it would be impossible to apply the same epithet to Dick Fraser.

He was, in fact, too clever to please Ione, who had only cunning and the natural subtlety of an unscrupulous woman to help her, and for this reason alone she preferred to keep him a friend as long as possible.

Greville was, as we have said, honestly delighted at this state of things.

"I knew the child had no malice in her, Heaven bless her!" he said to himself, as he heard Ione making all sorts of plans with Dick, who, on his part, was only too glad to show Greville's wife every attention in his power.

"Greville tells me I am to have a treat to-night at Lady Mostyn's," Ione said at the dinner-table on the Sunday following that meeting at the studio. "Do you think I shall care about this Mrs. Arbuthnot very much, Dick? I did hear her sing at the Caledonia's the other night."

"I think you will like her!" Dick said, very quietly.

How feeble and poor such words were to express all he felt for Mary!

Greville glanced across the table at him.

"Hard hit, poor chap!" he said to himself, and then he smiled. After all, matters would probably go very well for Dick. A man of his social position and calibre was not likely to woo in vain.

"She certainly is a most extraordinarily beautiful woman!" declared Sir William Seymour, who was dining at the table.

"Never saw such eyes, 'pon my life!"

Ione immediately registered a dislike to the young Baronet, and felt a thrill of coming jealousy for this Mrs. Arbuthnot. She could not bear to hear any other woman praised in her presence.

"I shall fall in love with her, I prophesy!" she said, in her pretty childish way. "Greville be prepared!"

"All right, Baby!" Greville answered, with a tender glance at the small red head that was one mass of glittering diamonds.

Ione was very restless to be off. Of late she had heard so much about this singing woman, as she called her, and she wanted to see and hear for herself.

"I wonder how Angelotti will like it!" she said, as her husband put her into her sables, for the night was cold.

"He is in Monte Carlo, having the devil's own luck!" Sir William said. "He won't be in it with Mrs. Arbuthnot when he does come back!"

"Oh! remember Angelotti's lovely eyes. Every woman adores him, you know!" Ione laughed, and Greville frowned unconsciously. He was not jealous of Ione. Love with him meant absolute confidence and trust. But there were times when a something in his young wife's manner and speech jarred on him; when a glimpse of Ione's vanity and unprincipled coquetry was given him in such a moment; and Greville was a man who held the strongest views on a woman's absolute purity of thought and mind.

"Not every woman I hope, my pearl!" he said, gently, as he lifted her into the brougham and they drove away together. He had christened her "Pearl" in memory of the yacht, and the days that threw them together.

"Silly, silly old thing!" Ione said, patting his face. She thought him jealous, of course. She delighted in her power. She



loved to tease him, and flaunt and laugh at him.

She made a great sensation as she entered Lady Mostyn's rooms. Her white satin gown was most gorgeous, her jewels more splendid even than the magnificent ones worn by those about her.

She had challenged comparison with most of the lovely women of society, and had come off triumphant, not overshadowing them maybe, but certainly holding her own well.

To-night she was to meet a woman "not of her world," as she arrogantly summed it up. Ione meant to crush her!

Lady Mostyn received her later guests with her usual smile, but there was a certain pallor in her face.

Mary had arrived punctually to the hour named, and had seen at once that her aunt had recognised her.

Nothing could have been more composed or colder than her manner, and she spoke to Lady Mostyn as though they were the most complete and absolute strangers.

Woman of the world as she was, Lady Mostyn had a particle of heart, and the memory of her dead brother, of Mary's own suffering, seemed to pierce her as she looked on the beautiful young face from which the light of joy seemed gone for ever.

She said nothing, however, only most courteously agreed to Mary's suggestion that she should sing at once.

Mary was standing on the raised dais at the further end of the room. She wore the same gossamer grey gown, and her purity and beauty seemed enhanced rather than shadowed by the brilliancy of those about her.

The opening prelude of her song was played, and she began to sing just as

Greville Earne and his party came into the room. There was a tinge of colour in her cheeks, and a depth in her eyes, and she sang as she had never sung before—passionately, nervously, soulfully. Her success was enormous.

Ione stood looking at her with a smile on her lips.

"Very pretty," she said, to those about her. "Quite lovely!"

In her heart she was jealously furious.

"I hate her!" she said. "She is more beautiful than I am!"

There could be no greater reason for hatred than that with Ione, Lady Greville Earne!

### CHAPTER XIII.

IONE's portrait was finished, and pronounced most excellent by all who knew her, and had an opportunity of seeing the work before it went up to the Academy.

Greville was full of warm praise about it. Dick Fraser gave his criticism in a quiet, kind way. How little he imagined that beneath Esther's calm exterior her whole heart was yearning with a sort of nervous excitement for his praise.

Mme. La Principessa di Conti Baldi (married very quietly and unostentatiously one morning at the Oratory) congratulated Miss Gall with a graceful tact, and there was a buzz and a flutter of admiration from the troops of people Ione was perpetually bringing to the studio.

A great many of these visitors were actuated by a second curiosity—over and above seeing Lady Greville's portrait.

It generally was known now that Mrs. Arbuthnot and Miss Gall were close and confidential friends, and it was hoped by

nearly all who came that an opportunity might be given of seeing Mrs. Arbuthnot, and examining her in her private and domestic life.

She was so quiet and reserved, this beautiful young woman who had taken all London by storm, and was the artistic success of the moment. She fulfilled all her engagements in the same graceful way, but was never drawn into anything like intimacy with any of the dozens who desired to penetrate the mystery of her life, and know all there was to know.

So, when Ione suggested, day after day, taking fresh people to see her picture, she found her invitations eagerly accepted. She would have been furiously angry if she had known that one-half the eagerness arose from interest not in herself, but in another, and that other one whom she had absolutely determined was hateful and objectionable.

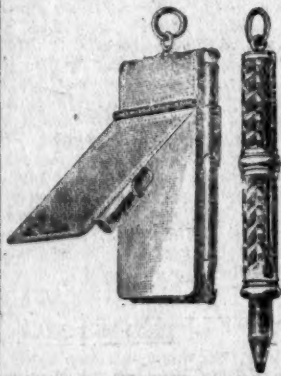
Her vanity spared her from imagining this, and she was so wrapped up in herself she never took any heed of the disappointment that was manifest with more than one of her friends when Mary did not appear.

Esther was not at all pleased at these incessant visits.

"The picture can go to your house for a few days, Lady Greville," she said, blantly, to Ione; who, however, refused to take the hint, and pursued the even tenor of her way undisturbed.

She did not like Esther. She was even jealous of hearing the girl's work praised, and she had a second reason for disliking her in remembering she was such a friend of Mrs. Arbuthnot's. Therefore, it gratified her in a small, mean way, to feel she was annoying Esther; and then, in another small, mean way, she always experienced

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12	9	14	3	15	12	14
13	1	18	7	1	20	5

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CUT THIS OUT

pleasure in putting her own vivid beauty beside Esther's plain face. Anything that gave Ione pleasure was, therefore, always to be encouraged.

"You have not a picture of Mrs. Arbuthnot, have you?" a lady who came with Ione asked Esther one day.

"Not a portrait," Esther answered, "but I often take her face for a model!"

"What a beautiful face it is!" the lady said, involuntarily.

Ione frowned.

"Has she been photographed?" she asked, in her most disagreeable way.

Esther answered "no," sharply.

"How funny," Ione said, with a laugh. "I thought actresses and public women always wanted to see themselves in shop windows?"

"Mrs. Arbuthnot has no such wish," Esther said coldly, though her cheeks flushed. "There is one quality about her as beautiful as her face, and that is the delicacy and innate modesty of her nature."

Ione laughed again, and made no reply, only her lips grew rather thin.

"How extraordinary it is," she observed to the lady with her as they drove away, "that common people never can stand any success. That girl is insufferably conceited and impertinent!"

"Do you think so?" the other answered, somewhat coldly. "It did not strike me. I rather like her. She has so much character, and, really, she is marvellously clever!"

The speaker being one of the prominent leaders of society, Ione felt it would be wiser to make no remark, but the dislike she had for Esther grew deeper and stronger.

Mary came into the studio after this visit, and saw the frown on her friend's face.

She kissed Esther gently.

"Something has vexed you?" she said.

Esther threw down a brush she had in her hand.

"That odious woman! I wish from the bottom of my heart I had never painted her!"

Mary coloured faintly.

"What has she done to-day, darling?"

She had grown used to hearing Esther animadvert strongly against Greville Earne's young wife, and, somehow, she always felt pain in so hearing, not on Ione's account, but on Greville's.

"Nothing worse than usual. She is always most rude and disagreeable. I verily believe to this day she imagines that we confiscated that bangle she lost, and never found!"

"Oh, no, Esther!" Mary said, involuntarily.

"Well, let us talk of something else," Esther said, flinging herself into a chair. "What plot have you and Mr. Fraser been hatching together? Something about going into the country?"

Mary coloured again.

"I have offered to go down and sing to Lady Barrackbourne," she said, a little hurriedly.

"And you have told Lord Greville?"

"Lord Greville knows nothing. He is so busy. I would—I mean—I thought Mr. Fraser would manage everything better for me. I don't want any fuss."

"When do you go, dear?"

"We," Mary corrected. "Mr. Fraser tells me his aunt takes the keenest interest in you, and is very anxious to meet you."

Esther flushed this time.

"Barrackbourne's a long way," she said, a little hurriedly.

"We will stay a day or two. It will do us both good to be out of London for a few hours. You—you don't mind, Esther?" Mary put her delicate hand on Esther's shoulder.

"My darling, I mind! I am delighted to go. It is just like you to take so much trouble."

"She is always so ill, her life must be dull. Mr. Fraser says she is the sweetest, most patient woman in the world, and that music is her passion. She has heard Angelotti. He is a personal friend, and stays at the Castle sometimes. But Mr. Fraser pays me a great compliment," Mary added, with a smile and blush, "for he says he believes Lady Barrackbourne will enjoy hearing me as much as Angelotti."

"A hundred times more I prophesy!" Esther said, bluntly. "Angelotti cannot compare with you!"

"Oh, Esther, you have never heard him!"

"I don't want to," complacently. "My mind is quite fixed on that point; but, tell me, Mary, when do we go?"

"To-morrow, if you will. We will remain until Monday. Mr. Fraser declares we must stay at the Castle, but this I—I would rather not. There is sure to be an inn or an hotel of some sort!"

"Called the 'Barrackbourne Arms,' of course," said Esther, laughing. Then she looked round. "But why is Lord Greville to know nothing of this?"

"A freak of mine!" Mary said, hurriedly. "I want to go away quietly. The pleasure of doing this will be lost if everyone knows of it."

"It would give him great pleasure, I am sure," Esther said.

In her heart of hearts Mary whispered,—"I hope it may indeed!" It was only a small way of repaying her debt of gratitude, but she felt that it was one of the best she could have chosen.

"What a dear, nice man Mr. Fraser is!" she said out loud. "Don't you like him, Esther? Sometimes, dear, do you know, I have a sort of fancy you don't?"

Esther rose and began settling some canvases.

"Oh, yes!" she said, in an off-hand way.

"I like him pretty well. He seems all right, I should think," she continued, hurriedly, "he could be very nice if he liked, just as Lord Greville is. I have lost my heart to him, Mary, and I am so sorry for him!"

"Sorry for him, Esther?"

"Yes; because I know his wife. My dear!" Esther asked, standing upright for a moment, not an unpicturesque object in her long, blue painting blouse, "my dear, what could have induced him to marry her?"

"He loves her," Mary said, with a sort of thrill in her voice, and a soft tinge of colour in her cheeks. "He loves her, Esther!"

"He thinks he does," Esther corrected.

"You know, Mary, I am a little bit of a worldly-wise person, and I see and understand most things pretty well. Lord Greville Earne, mark my words, is no more in love, really, truly, and purely in love with that girl than I am with Tim. It is a sort of infatuation; her beauty has bewitched him. As yet he is blind to her faults, but his eyes must be opened some day, sooner or later. Probably," Esther added, shrewdly, "as they are rich and mighty, it will be later than sooner, for they will not be thrown too intimately together as poorer people would be; but, late though it be, the time will come when he will know and understand Lady Greville as she really is!"

"Dear," Mary said, gently, "are you not a little prejudiced? You don't like Lady Greville. She has hurt your feelings in many ways, but this is not a reason for judging her too—"

"Darling!" Esther said, tenderly, yet

abruptly. "You have not got it in you to comprehend the sort of woman Lady Greville is. I have, and I am not judging her too harshly. *Nous verrons!* In the meanwhile we will go and pack. How lovely! Three whole long days in the country. To see Spring beginning to peep up shyly wherever a chance occurs. I warn you," Esther said, solemnly, "I shall behave very badly. I shall skip and run like a young lamb, and, no doubt, be taken for an escaped lunatic before I have been there an hour. Does the prospect frighten you, my sweet?"

Mary laughed.

"I daresay I shall join you in your gambols unless you are very outrageous in your conduct."

She grew grave a moment.

"I am glad to leave town, Esther! It relieves one's mind and brain, and I—I am a little worried about Aunt Helena. Am I right to refuse to see her, or hold any communication with her, I wonder?"

"Most certainly you are! Give in now, and you will be tyrannised over a second time, perhaps worse than the first. Hold your own, and you will bring Lady Mostyn to her bearings. Remember, you are no longer Mary Temple, the penniless dependant, but Mary Arbuthnot the celebrated singer, honoured and loved already, and with an almost certain fortune awaiting you in the future. This will have its effect with Lady Mostyn, I can tell you!"

Esther said no more, pausing almost abruptly, as a sudden thought came to her.

"What if it should have an effect on another beside Lady Mostyn?"

The spectre of Paul Cosanza always loomed in the background of Esther's dreams about Mary. She knew the despicable character of the man so well; and thought she had argued Mary's safety from him when urging the girl to adopt her present career, she dreaded the result of any trouble or sorrow arising from this cause.

"Thank Heaven! she seems to be forgetting him!" she said to herself, as she glanced at Mary's face that was turned down, looking through the little window, with a smile hovering on the lips. "Her eyes are not nearly so hunted, her expression is more peaceful. Work, success, the world's kindness, are almost giving her back her shadowed youth. Her beauty grows every day! I can sometimes see the Mary I used to know in the past, laugh and smile out of her eyes. Oh, Heaven! I pray," Esther said, passionately, to herself, "that she may have her happiness now undisturbed by him or his wicked, miserable doings!"

#### CHAPTER XIV.

GREVILLE was much surprised on a particular Friday evening, to discover, on his return home from a political club dinner, that his wife was nowhere to be found.

"Her ladyship has gone away quite suddenly," the butler informed him. "She has received a letter from Madame la Princesse, her mother, and had started for Paris in consequence. Her ladyship had left a note for his lordship; her ladyship's maid had accompanied her ladyship!" This, delivered with much diffidence, was all the butler had to say.

Greville took the note, turned into a lower room, and opened it.

There was a shadow on his face. He was angry and hurt. Nothing could have astonished him more than this erratic and unconventional conduct. Ione was a child. It is true, but being so she should have done nothing on her own responsibility. He felt dismayed, unhappy, and very wrathful.



Ione's note did not please or satisfy him very much.

"Darling!" she wrote, "mamma wants to see me. She leaves Paris on Tuesday. She is not well enough to travel to England, so I am going to her instead! Don't be cross with your pearl, please. I must think of poor mamma, and I have got Suzanne with me! I shall also take one of the men to travel with us and look after me! Now, don't fret or miss me much, darling! I shall be home again on Tuesday. Ione kisses you with all her heart. She tries to imagine how her darling will look when he does not find his pearl!"

Greville crushed the note in his hand, and turned to look at the clock. There was no possibility of following his impulsive, foolish, thoughtless, childwife to-night! He must wait until the morning. Waiting is never pleasant under any circumstances. To Greville the thought of the hours that must elapse before the morning was simply unbearable. He went slowly up the stairs. He was more annoyed and anxious every moment. If Ione's mother was really ill, of course there was some excuse; but, somehow, Greville could not quite reconcile this thought of illness. Ione had forgotten to enclose the Princess's telegram! Silly, pretty child! and she was even now on the boat crossing the Channel. A lover's fears sprang into being.

What if there should be an accident? What if anything should happen to her? Oh! why was it to-night of all nights he had been compelled to attend that stupid, political dinner? Why had not the Prince telegraphed to him? Why had not someone sent down to the club and informed him of Ione's intentions? Why had not something occurred to have prevented his darling from doing this thing?

He pushed open the door of Ione's room.

It gave him a sort of pang to see it as it was—not quite set in order, the fire dead in the hearth, the lights low, giving a sort of dim look to the large, exquisitely appointed chamber, with its sort of half empty, bereft air. Greville stood in the room perplexed and wretched.

"I must make her promise never to do such a thing again!" he said to himself.

He was turning away when his eye fell on a bit of crumpled paper on the hearth. It was the telegram from the Princess crushed into a ball, and, flung, as Ione thought, into the fire.

Greville took it up and unrolled the paper. "Poor little baby," he said, tenderly. "She has such a loving, generous heart. It is only natural she should fret if—"

He turned up a gas jet near, and read the telegram through.

It puzzled him at first, as telegrams are apt to do with their terseness, but he began to understand by degrees.

"Can do nothing with Norris. She is obdurate. Refuses to make anything under two months. Advise you to come and see her yourself. You may succeed."

That was all. It was signed from Ione's mother, but not a word did it say about an illness or anything of the sort.

Greville experienced a horrible sensation. He examined the telegram carefully to see he was making no mistake. The date was correct. It had been sent from Paris in the afternoon. "Norris make anything under two months." He began to understand. The cause of Ione's journey was not filial affection, or anything a quarter so noble. She had gone to Paris in this hurried, undignified, impossible way only to interview an obdurate dressmaker!

Greville felt cold and sick with anger and pain—anger at Ione's foolishness, pain at her deceit.

She had written him a falsehood. She had absolutely invented her mother's illness as an excuse for her conduct.

He sat down on a chair near, and put his head in his hand. Had an earthquake suddenly rent the ground beneath his feet the man could not have felt a more awful shock.

Ione, his pearl, his pretty innocent child wife—the child in whose pure, sweet mind he had told himself not even the shadow of a wrong thought had ever crept—Ione had written him a deliberate lie. She had intended to deceive him as deliberately.

In the hurry of her departure she had not noticed that the telegram was undestroyed. It had been her wish to destroy it; for that reason she had flung it, as she imagined, into the fire.

Why had she done this? Why not have written the truth? Was she afraid of his anger? Surely he had never given her cause to fear him? He had never given her an angry look, never spoken any but gentle, tender words since they were made man and wife. Why, then, not have written the truth? Of course, it would have seemed a foolish reason for so hurried a departure, but it would have been more natural in an impulsive child.

There were hot tears in Greville's eyes when he rose and went quietly out of his wife's room. He seemed to have had a sharp blow struck him—a blow that stunned him, even though the sting of the pain lasted.

He sat long into the night, thinking over it. Love, that divine mediator, began to urge excuses. She was so young, she had not meant to deceive him, she was so fond of pretty things. Perhaps she wanted to surprise him, to please. The arguments came, but did not last. None of them were strong enough to urge a deliberate falsehood.

He flung himself on his bed, wearied out at last, and fell into a heavy sleep that was disturbed by feverish dreams, and not refreshing. When he awoke it was past eight o'clock. He gave his valet hurried instructions to throw a few things into a bag. They might be just in time to catch the train to Dover. While he was dressing a telegram was brought him.

"Arrived safely. Poor mamma a little better. Shall be home Tuesday."

Greville stood silent for a moment.

This telegram seemed to be the final touch to Ione's deceit. The lie was continued even this morning.

A sudden revulsion of feeling came upon him.

"I will not go to her," he said. "Pray Heaven I may never be tempted to be angry with her. I will let a little time go before we meet. Then—then, perhaps, she will come to me of her own accord, and confess to her little wrong." His face flushed with pleasure at the thought. It was a gleam of sunshine where all was grey.

"I am not going to Paris, Evans!" he said, quietly, to his man.

"Shall I unpack the things, my lord?" the man asked imperturbably.

Greville hesitated.

"No, leave them!" he said, "I may go away this afternoon."

"I will write to her a few lines," he said to himself; "but I will say nothing of what I know. She will tell me herself—I am sure she will"—this hurriedly, as though some one had suggested a doubt—"and I will not let her know she has pained me, save by taking herself from me. I must guard her more carefully. I must think for her, and protect her from all folly in the future, my poor little Ione!"

(To be continued next week.)

(This story commenced in No. 2001. Back Nos. can be obtained through any newsagent.)

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## Cleanings

THE value of a man's advice depends upon the success he has achieved in following it.

If you want to see a light eater suddenly acquire an appetite just ask him to lunch with you.

A POLIORMAN, like a rainbow, is a token of peace, and both have a habit of appearing after the storm is over.

COPENHAGEN, Denmark, has a larger deer park than any other city in the world. It covers an area of 4,200 acres.

A BLACK SPIDER stung Henry W. Rausch, of Baltimore, and caused death. The wound was on the neck, and in a few hours face and neck were swollen beyond recognition.

In calm weather the speed of a carrier pigeon is 1,200 yards a minute; when a brisk wind is blowing in the direction of its flight a pigeon has been known to make 1,900 yards a minute.

BACHELORS are more prone to dyspepsia than married men. The cause is assigned to the fact that bachelors so often eat alone that their meals are seldom enjoyable. Good company and cheerful conversation aid digestion.

In Melbourne a law regulating the sale of liquors declares that all saloons must be closed on Sundays, with the doors locked. Thirsty patients find the doors locked, but a key hangs in a convenient place, and they find entrance easy.

MAX O'RELL declares that "Hungarian women are the most beautiful in the world. They have the faces of Madonnas and the figures of the Greek statues. No curve is exaggerated, but every one is there, the right size, in the right place."

WINE growers in France send sample bottles of wine by mail to prospective patrons. The mail clerks delight to handle these bottles, and occasionally sample them, to assure themselves that they are just what the advertisements state.

ICE AS A PRESERVATIVE.—An unusual method of preserving rare flowers for transportation, is to freeze them in distilled water. In Europe, ice is largely used with flowers on dining tables and sideboards for decoration. Incandescent lights are placed within the ice for evening functions.

A SIMPLE method of capturing butterflies alive is adopted in Japan. Trees are covered with a preparation of phosphorus and wet sugar. The phosphorus at night attracts the insects, and they stick fast to the sugar-smeared boughs, and the collector can leisurely remove them.

THE bedroom outfit of a man in Kansas comprises just two articles, a quilt and an alarm clock. On a recent sultry night, with his outfit under his arm, he went to the park, spread his quilt on the grass, but the clock near the spot selected for his head, and deliberately went to bed.

A little railroad seven miles long connects the two Japanese coast towns of Atami and Yoshihome. The rolling stock consists of a single car, and the motive power is furnished by a couple of muscular coolies, who actually push the car along wherever power is necessary. When the car comes to down grade, they jump on and ride.

A MINISTER in a provincial town regretfully learned that the church collections were diminishing in amount. On a recent Sabbath he informed his congregation, just before the plates were passed round, that the members who were in debt were not expected to contribute. To his delight he later was informed that the collection was double the usual sum.

In the examination paper of a Philadelphia schoolboy he was required to name the vital organs of the human body. This is what he wrote: "Heart, liver, lungs, and lights. These are the eternal organs."

THOSE who can carry their minds back twenty-four years will remember the commotion which the arrival of the Colorado beetle created. For some, though very few, actually did arrive, and the interesting but destructive little insect was actually made the subject of an Order in Council, whereby certain solid penalties were exacted from those who should knowingly harbour it. Even the Zoological Gardens were not permitted to keep a specimen, but facsimiles of it in wax were freely circulated, so that it might be identified and destroyed when met with. Happily, the scare did not last long, and a year after the potato farmer had settled down into his accustomed serenity.

NEW BEGGING GAME.—A new profession has been practiced apparently for years by an enterprising mendicant of Sidney. Dressed in a respectable suit of clothes, he has sauntered through the streets explaining to passers-by that he has accidentally left his tobacco pouch at home, and would be obliged for a "fill" for his pipe. Colonials are so open-handed with their property that in a day's work he had collected a valuable stock, which he has "classed" at night and sold to tobaccoconists. He was lately shown up by stopping the same man with the same story about his own forgetfulness within a quarter of an hour. It is an interesting legal point whether he can be punished. If so, one is liable to be arrested for asking a stranger for a match.

ONE of the most beautiful railway routes in the world is that which traverses the valley of the Hudson River, but the scenery is spoiled in the most exasperating fashion by the hideous atrocities of the advertising fiend. A correspondent who recently travelled from Montreal to New York through this once delightful country of Washington Irving, describes the devastation wrought by the unscrupulous advertiser as horrible. Not only are all the beauty-spots marred and disfigured by blatant hoardings, but the sides of most of the houses that can be seen from the carriage windows have also been utilised for proclaiming the virtues of various specifics in the largest letters. Formally pills and soap held a monopoly of this sort of outrage, but these are now supplemented by a score of other more or less popular products.

J. D. ROCKEFELLER as the possessor of £200,000,000, is by far the richest man in the world. In 1890, 11 years ago, he had, according to report, £20,000,000; the figures at which Cornelius and W. K. Vanderbilt, Jay Gould, and Leland Stanford were rated. There was but one man in the United States possessing more than the individuals in this group. He was J. J. Astor. Below Rockefeller and Co. were various little fellows who could count from four to fourteen millions. Rockefeller is said to have made £6,000,000 a year during the past decade, but this is an underestimate. He must have roped in at least £16,000,000. These "earnings" were not regular, his biggest hauls coming during the recent rise in stocks. While in the United States millionaires and even billionaires are created with wonderful rapidity, the rush of capital into the hands of individuals is slow in the United Kingdom. Thus, the Duke of Westminster, whose estates have been passed down to him through a procession of ancestors, is said to be worth no more than £10,000,000. As a matter of fact, the British aristocracy is poor, and honorably so, when compared with the United States "millionaire-tocracy."

TAMING AN ANT.—A scientific man fond of experimenting, has succeeded in taming an ant. He keeps tribes of ants in nests, which he has made himself, and feeds them with honey or sugar through a tube that connects with the nests. One day he saw that one of the ants kept coming into the tube to eat up the honey in the glass bulb at the end. When he took out the cork that closed the bulb, the insect came to look for the food, and he offered it some honey on the point of a needle. The ant shrank back at first then drew nearer, feeling about with its antennae, until it reached the needle. Soon it learned to take the honey off its keeper's finger, although ants are among the most timid of living things, and a new odor, or the least movement outside their nests, usually drives these little beasts away. This ant is now so tame that it quits the bulb as soon as the cork is removed, and goes to find the honey on the scientist's finger.

FARMING TOLD ON HIM.—It was not a Canadian farmer of whom an English paper tells a story, although the incident might possibly be matched in this country. The agriculturist in question had been to a rent dinner to enjoy himself among men in his own walk in life, while his hardworking wife stayed at home and saw to it that the farm suffered no loss in his absence. "I'm about tired out," was the man's greeting upon his return. "Is t' cows in t' barn?" "Yes, long since," replied his spouse, barely stopping a moment from her duties to glance at him as she spoke. "Is t' horses unharnessed and fed?" he enquired. "Yes." "Fowls locked up?" "Yes." "Wood chopped for mornin'?" "Yes." "Thum ducks plucked and dressed for market?" "Yes." "Wagon wheel mended and ready to start in t' mornin'?" "Yes." "Oh, then," concluded the good man with a sigh of relief, "let me have my supper and turn in. Farmin' is beginnin' to tell on me."

THERE have been rumours for some time that Mr. Edison has invented a new storage battery which will revolutionise the use of electricity. This battery is now complete and scientific tests show that it will undoubtedly prove of the greatest value in the manufacture of electric motors of all kinds. It is claimed for Mr. Edison's new invention that, by the use of a novel compound of iron for the positive pole, combined with the same amount of graphite, and a negative pole of finely divided nickel and graphite, the weight of the storage battery has been reduced to less than one-third, the time for charging reduced to one-half, and the rapid deterioration now incident to the use of lead cells practically done away with. The new battery, it is claimed, will drive a car or automobile a hundred miles with but a single charge, instead of thirty miles, as do those now in use. It will soon make electric motors much cheaper than horses for all manner of hauling.

## Dean Farrar on Marriage

A charming article on this subject forms a delightful introduction to a handbook, entitled "Marriage, Weddings and the Home," which is absolutely invaluable to all who are contemplating matrimony. This book will prove a very acceptable present to all engaged couples. A Purchaser at Nottingham says: "From a very cursory inspection I should imagine it to be a most useful book." It explains every point in regard to etiquette, offers suggestions as to where to spend the honeymoon, there is a chapter in regard to furnishing, etc., and the 1/6 which it costs is a marvellously good investment.—Send Stamps or Postal Order to-day to F. W. SEARS, 7, OGDON CHAMBER, 1, DODGATE HILL, LONDON.



## Statistics

THE locomotive superintendent of the Caledonian Railway Company has introduced a mineral engine whose working has attracted much attention, as it is probably the largest in the United Kingdom. It is designed to take very heavy loads over the steep gradients of the Caledonian system, the total tractive force being 28,665 lb. The cylinders are 21 in. in diameter, and the piston stroke 26 in., while the boiler, which is of great length, has very extensive heating surface. The wheels are 4 ft. 6 in. in diameter, and all eight are coupled.

THE German Emperor's yacht, the *Hohenzollern*, may be regarded as the pioneer of modern royal yachts. She is a shapely vessel of 4,187 tons displacement. Being long, narrow in the beam, and of shallow draught, with good engines, she can travel at a speed of twenty-two knots. She mounts quite a considerable battery of guns, including three 4.1-inch quick-firers and twelve four-pounder quick-firers, so that she would be able to "face the music" were she attacked on the high seas. She is as graceful as any ship afloat—a warlike sovereign's warlike toy. After the *Hohenzollern*, in point of age, comes the *Czar's Standard*, which was completed at Copenhagen in 1895. With a displacement of 5,557 tons, a speed of over twenty-one knots, and a battery of eight three-pounder quick-firing guns, this Imperial vessel could accommodate a large party on a pleasure cruise or do useful service as a war cruiser. In this respect she resembles the *Hohenzollern*, though she has the advantage of being more roomy, but is not so powerfully armed.

## Gems

CHANCE and luck are the twin children of ignorance and infidelity.

THE man too busy for prayer is like a workman too busy to sharpen his tools.

THE body is the temple, the heart is the altar, love is the incense.

If lying lips are an abomination to the Lord, what are lying lives?

To speak well is to sound like a cymbal, but to do well is to act like an angel.

CHASTISEMENT is like the blister the doctor applies, to draw out the inflammation that would kill.

## Cheerfulness and Longevity.

It is generally the case that cheerful people are rewarded with long life. Commonplace though this sounds, there is no truth more commonly ignored in actual every-day existence. "Oh, yes, of course, worry shortens life, and the contented people live to be old!" we are all ready to say; and yet how many people recognize the duty of cheerfulness? Most persons will declare that if a man is not naturally cheerful he cannot make himself so. Yet this is far from being the case, and there is many a man who is at present a weary burden to his relatives, miserable through the carking care of some bodily ailment, perhaps, or some worldly misfortune, who, if he had grown up into the idea that to be cheerful under all circumstances was one of the first duties of life, might still see a pleasant enough world around him. Thackeray truly remarked that the world is for each of us much as we show ourselves to the world. If we face it with a cheery resignation, we find the world fairly full of cheerful people glad to see us. If we snarl at it and abuse it, we may be sure of abuse in return.

## Helpful Talks.

BY THE EDITOR.

The Editor is pleased to hear from his readers at any time.

All letters must give the name and address of the writers, not for publication, but as a guarantee of good faith.

MRS. C., WOKING.—I am gratified to find that you think so well of the LONDON READER.

FAITHFUL SUBSCRIBER.—Very pleased to number you among the many who have taken the LONDON READER from the first. You are indeed a "Faithful Subscriber."

R. NUTLEY.—It is considered etiquette for the residents of a place to first call upon newcomers. Such visits should be returned within a week or two. If your neighbours do not call, you must infer that they are not anxious to make your acquaintance.

TARANTULA.—The word "like" should be used on such occasions instead of "love." "I like apples," or "I like beefsteak," is the way to express a fondness for such gross things. "Love" is reserved for higher and nobler objects.

F. G. B., Kimberley, asks:—"What is the nationality of a child born of Italian parents, on a ship flying the Union Jack, in foreign waters." This is an old and familiar question that has been answered more than once in our columns. The child is a British subject.

MRS. BURROWS.—To sterilize milk, put it in a quart bottle, and fill to within two inches of the top. Place the bottle in a deep saucepan filled with cold water up to the neck of the bottle. Gradually bring the water to a boil. When it has boiled for fourteen minutes, the milk is sterilized. Shake the bottle well, and set aside to cool. As soon as cooled, place it on the ice. When about to prepare the baby's mixture for feeding, boil some fresh water and mix it with the milk. Close the large bottle quickly and again place it on the ice.

NETTIE.—My space can be better occupied than in devoting it to such a silly use as a description of the "postage-stamp flirtation." When two young people are so deeply enamoured of each other as to find protracted amusement in this idiotic performance, they need a medical inquisition regarding their sanity. Somebody once wittily said that the first and only rule in the postage-stamp flirtation should be thus expressed: "Putting a stamp on an envelope anywhere except the upper right-hand corner, means 'I am a fool.'"

London  
Reader

SPOT COUPON.

Oct. 5th. 1901.

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EPPS'S

GRATEFUL-COMFORTING.

COCOA

BREAKFAST-SUPPER.

### DEFECTIVE SIGHT

Many people suffer from bad sight, or films and specks. All such should send to STEPHEN GREEN, 210, Lambeth Road, London, for his little book, "How to Preserve the Eyesight." This tells of SINGLETON'S EYE OINTMENT, a cure for all troubles of the eyes, eyelids, and eyelashes, having 300 years' reputation as the best remedy. Supplied in ancient pedestal pots for 2/- each by all chemists & stores. Please note that it retains its healing virtues for years.

### THE ORIGINAL KEARSLEY'S 100 YEARS REPUTATION FEMALE PILLS

Awarded Certificate of Merit for the cure of Irregularities, Anemia, and all Female Complaints. They have the approval of the Medical Profession. Beware of Imitations. The only genuine and original are in *White Paper Envelopes*. Boxes, 1/-, 1/-, and 2/-, of all Chemists. 2/-, 6/-, but contain three times the pills. Or by post, or 34 stamps, by the makers, C. and G. KEARSLEY, 17, North Street, Westminster. Sold in the Colonies.

### TOWLE'S PENNYROYAL PILLS FOR FEMALES

QUICKLY CORRECT ALL IRREGULARITIES, REMOVE ALL OBSTRUCTIONS, and relieve the distressing symptoms so prevalent with the sex. Boxes, 1/-, 1/-, and 2/- (contains three times the quantity), of all Chemists. Sent anywhere on receipt of 15 or 34 stamps, by E. T. TOWLE & Co., Manufacturers, Dryden St., Nottingham. Beware of Imitations, inferior and worthless.

TROUBLED HUSBAND.—This correspondent informs me that he has been married only seven months, but that during that time his wife's mother has contrived to spend the past two months as a seemingly permanent resident of his home. The more he hints to his wife that it is about time for her mother to bring her visit to an end, the more determined is the wife to retain her as a member of the household. Now this gentleman seeks my advice, with the hope that it may enable him to adopt some adroit means to dislodge her without creating matrimonial trouble. I can only suggest the plan adopted by a similarly annoyed gentleman, the hero of an anecdote related by Max O'Rell. A short time after his marriage his mother-in-law installed herself in his house. The son-in-law welcomed her, and lavished the most assiduous attentions upon her. He was not a church-goer; he went to church, and insisted on carrying the excellent lady's books of devotion. When a walk was taken, it was to her he offered his arm. "Your mother is old," he said to his wife, "and so kind, too! I am getting awfully fond of her!" In the evening, after his wife had retired, he sat up with his mother-in-law, and took a hand at piquet. At the end of the week the mother-in-law had vanished as if by magic. The young and neglected wife had managed the affair.

**D.D.**—You need not replace windows which were broken at the time your tenancy commenced.

**THEODORA.**—Young women who have grown rapidly, and are of an age neither childlike or mature, are usually angular and occasionally awkward, but time and education will remedy these defects. Avoid tight lacing and padding, and all other devices, which, instead of promoting beauty, bring deformity and ruin of health.

**D. CLAY.**—It is asserted by physiognomists that a sharp indentation immediately above the chin shows good understanding; a pointed chin a sign of craftiness, wisdom, and discretion; a soft, flat, double chin shows epicurism and love of pleasure of all sorts—it also indicates an indolent temperament; a flat chin shows a cold, hard nature; a small chin indicates weakness, want of will power, and cowardice; a retreating chin is a sign of silliness, and, if the brow is shallow, of imbecility; a round chin, with a dimple in it, denotes kindness and benevolence, a tender and unselfish nature. In a very massive double chin the dimple shows extraordinary love of pleasure. A square and massive chin denotes strong perseverance and determined will.

**T. HOPKINS.**—The interesting stories told in the "Arabian Nights" were not the productions of any one person. Originally they were related by the story-tellers of Arabia. They were afterward committed to writing by one or more persons, and finally were collected in the form in which they are now found. They were first translated from the Arabic into the French by Gallard and published in 1704. The most commendable English translation from the Arabic is that of E. W. Lane, published in 1839. Mr. Lane was the best Arabic and Syriac scholar of his day, and on the recommendation of the Prime Minister of England he received a pension from Queen Victoria in recognition of his services. His version of the "Arabian Nights" has been translated into almost every European language.

**IONE.**—You should save spent tea leaves for a few days, then steep them in a tin pail or pan for half-an-hour; strain through a sieve, and use the tea for all varnished paints. It requires very little elbow polish, as the tea acts as a strong detergent, cleansing the paint from all impurities, and making it equal to new. It cleans window sashes and oilcloths; indeed, any varnished surface is improved by its application. It washes window panes and mirrors much better than water, and is excellent for cleaning black walnut and looking-glass frames. It will not do to wash unvarnished paints with.

**AN ADMIRER.**—Miss Marie Corelli, the novelist, was born in Italy, and is of mingled Italian and Scotch parentage. She is Catholic, and was educated in a French convent, where, with other intellectual requirements, she received a first-class musical education. In infancy she was adopted by Charles Mackay, the poet and litterateur, who was born in Perth, Scotland, March 27, 1814, and died in London, December 24, 1889. He was editor of the "Illustrated London News" from 1852 to 1859. Marie Corelli's first book, "A Romance of Two Worlds," was published in 1886, when she was twenty years of age. The name she has borne since her adoption is Eva Mary Mackay.

**CAROLINE.**—At one time, many years ago, the wedding ring was worn on the first finger. People who have seen the old pictures of the Madonna in Rome will remember that in one or two of them there is a glistening ring on the forefinger of her right hand, but with Christianity came the wearing of the wedding ring on the third finger rather than the first. The old story of there being a vein that runs from that finger to the heart is nonsense. Its use originated in this way: The priest first put it on the thumb, saying, "In the name of the father;" next on the forefinger, adding, "In the name of the Son;" on the second finger, repeating, "In the name of the Holy Ghost," and on the third finger, ending "Amen," and there it was allowed to remain.

**ALUM.**—A simple and effectual method of erasing spots of grease, wax, oil, or any other fat substance from books, is by washing the part with ether, and place it between white blotting paper; then, with a hot iron, press over the part stained, and the defect will be speedily removed. In many cases where the stains are not bad, rectified spirits of wine will be found to answer the purpose. Another method of removing grease from paper is to strew over the spot or spots, a little finely-powdered French chalk; cover this with a piece of clean blotting paper, then hold a hot iron close to the paper without bringing it in contact.

**W. BARTON.**—The fish most useful to man is perhaps the cod, and it is one of the most prolific of the denizens of the sea. As an article of diet—whether fresh or salted and dried—it is a most important addition to our food supplies, and is made use of in various ways for the support of man and beast over a vast area. The tongue is regarded as a delicacy, the swimming bladder furnishes isinglass almost equal to that of the sturgeon, and the liver gives us the oil which is much recommended as a tonic and a food in atrophy, consumption, and all wasting complaints. The Norwegians give cod's head mixed with marine plants to cows to increase the yield of milk; the Icelanders give the bones to their cattle; in Kamtschatka, dogs are fed on them; and in icy wastes, codfish are usually dried and used as fuel. The cod is prolific enough to admit of this extensive use, for the average yield of each fish is 9,000,000 eggs.

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ALL LETTERS TO BE ADDRESSED TO THE EDITOR OF THE LONDON READER, 50-52, LUDGATE HILL, E.C.

\*. We cannot undertake to return rejected manuscripts.

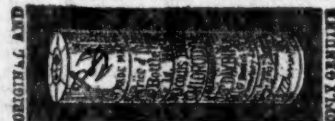
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**DR. J. COLLIS BROWNE'S CHLORODYNE**—Vice-Chancellor Sir W. PAGE WOOD stated publicly in Court that Dr. J. COLLIS BROWNE was undoubtedly the INVENTOR OF CHLORODYNE, that the whole story of the defendant Freeman was deliberately untrue, and he regretted to say it had been sworn to.—See *The Times*, July 18th, 1864.

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